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BY THE LATE

NATHANIEL COTTON, M.D.

MANY OF WHICH WERE NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

Vitæ ſanctitas ſumma, comitas par. Inſectatur vitia, non homines. PLIN. EP. x.

Edendum autem ex pluribus cauſis—maximè quòd libelli, quos emiſit, dicuntur in manibus eſſe, quamvis jam gratiam novitatis exuerint. PLIN. EP. ii.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MIRZA

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MIRZA TO SELIM.

He takes notice of the death of an eminent rabbi, mentioning ſome odd circumſtances attending his preceding illneſs—expatiates in praiſe of Solomon's wiſdom—inquires where the ſoul of the departed rabbi is lodged—and concludes with an exhortation to friendſhip in the region of the inviſibles.

THE rabbi whoſe indiſpoſition I made mention of in my laſt, is no longer a tenant of mortality. He commenced an immortal on the tenth of the preſent moon, about the fifth watch in the morning. But the arreſt by the hand of the grim monarch was not ſudden. For on the ſecond day of the preceding week the angel of the grave intimated his intended approach, by commiſſioning the gout to attack him in the diſguiſe of an apoplexy; which conveyed him into

the cold embrace of the king of terrors, who peaceably uſhered him into the region of the inviſibles.

Though his departure was expected, and his tranſition eaſy, there were nevertheleſs ſome circumſtances which rendered his removal ſurpriſing to his ſurviving friends.

He had been confined to his chamber with a ſlight pain and ſwelling of his ancles near three weeks, which ſymptoms were ſo much abated on the 28th of the laſt moon, that he came down into his parlour on that day, and cheerfully acknowledged a ſuperiority of health to what he had enjoyed for ſome years. His evening repaſt was accompanied with two or three of his acquaintances, who obſerved him to be remarkably facetious, and congratulated him on the improvement of his ſpirits. But ſcarcely were they arrived at their reſpective homes, ere a meſſenger followed with the lamentable news of the doctor's illneſs. There is alſo an occurrence, which I muſt not omit to mention, becauſe it hath furniſhed ſpeculation to many of this place, and perhaps may do the ſame to thee, if thou be fond of ſtrange narratives, and thy mind have a tendency to credulity.

It is given out, that this eccleſiaſtic was a prophet, as well as a prieſt. Theſe two characters,

thou knoweſt, were often blended together in the prieſthood of the circumciſed ſons of Jacob. But late times furniſh few inſtances of the province of prieſt and ſeer centering in one and the ſame perſon. Our friend, amidſt the reveries of a diſtempered imagination, frequently interrogated thoſe that ſtood about his couch, "who was to ſucceed him in his fortune?" they replied, that he was the propereſt perſon to appoint his ſucceſſor; but that they imagined the relation and fondneſs, which he bore to his brother, would probably induce him to transfer his property to ſo near a relation. To all which the dying man anſwered, that ſuch were his intentions, but his poor brother would not long enjoy the inheritance; confirming his ſentiments and concern with a pathetic ſhake of his head.

The diſſolution of our friends, and the mortality which awaits ourſelves, are apt to fill our minds with grief and anxiety. To reconcile us to the loſs of our acquaintances, and to our own deceaſe, what volumes have been compoſed! It is the fond theme of the ſchool-boy, and the ſermon of the aged prelate! But of all the treatiſes which I have ſeen upon this ſubject, none gives me more ſatisfaction than the oriental fragments of a prince, who once ſat upon the throne of Iſrael. The Hebrews boaſt aloud of this learned monarch;

and truly ſeveral remnants of this Jewiſh king's writings, that are handed down to us, afford a juſt occaſion to believe what we are told of Solomon's wiſdom; for ſo they named their favourite prince.

Nor perhaps is there any circumſtance, that tends to raiſe in our minds a greater idea of his underſtanding, than the firſt ſtep, which he took to ſecure himſelf upon his father's throne. His parent and predeceſſor was called to the government from purſuing the meaneſt occupation; (for the hiſtory ſays, that he followed his father's flocks upon the mountains) and at a green age, before his beard had ratified his manhood. Under theſe diſadvantages of obſcure birth, and unexperienced life, he was ſet over a numerous people eminently factious, and given to change. His reign, as might well be expected, was a perpetuated ſtruggle with difficulties and diſtreſs. After many years he died, having nominated, a little before his death, this ſon, of a late marriage, to ſucceed to the ſceptre of Jeruſalem; although he had at the ſame time other ſons, who were the offſpring of his former wives. Solomon, however, ſeemingly by the artifice of his mother, but more properly by the immediate will of Heaven, aſcended the throne in ſpite of the attempts of his brothers to foreſtall him.

Being

Being thus inveſted with royal power, the prudent youth bethought himſelf, that the circumſtances of his birth, and the turbulent diſpoſition of his ſubjects would not fail to inſpire the people with a contempt of their young monarch, and with meaſures to dethrone this junior iſſue of their late king. Under theſe difficulties the royal boy proſtrated himſelf before the Almighty; and, forbearing to aſk for power, grandeur, and riches (which a man would have imagined to be the prevailing paſſion of a young mind) he only ſolicited wiſdom. The ſtory adds, that his petition was ſo exceeding pleaſing to God, that it was immediately complied with; and all other deſirable appertenances were annexed.

Thou wilt excuſe this digreſſion, becauſe it was neceſſary, in order to give thee a juſt idea of the prudence of the ſtripling, and to incline thee to think the more favourably of the traditionary maxims and aphoriſms of his advanced years. This wiſe prince hath every where in his writings inculcated upon the minds of men a ſenſe of the tranſient nature of all ſublunary enjoyments, and of our mortality. So that according to his reaſoning, it is the part of wiſdom for every man to conſider himſelf as a paſſenger, and his houſe as a caravanſara; to look upon gilded palaces and beautiful fields with all the indifference of a tra-

veller, whoſe poſſeſſion at beſt is but a loan of ſhort duration; for if they are not taken away from him, he muſt ſpeedily paſs away from them, and make room for the next comer.

But declining the proſecution of a common theme, let thou and I aſk ourſelves, where the mind of our deceaſed friend is migrated? O! for ſome courteous angel to tell us this great ſecret! to inſtruct us in the provinces aſſigned to diſembodied ſpirits! Do they ſleep till the reſurrection? and if ſo, where are their dormitories? Or if they are exempted from the ſlumbers of the grave, where do they exert their active faculties? or where are the repoſitories of theſe wonderful intelligences?

But theſe problems are never to be unriddled by mortals! An impenetrable cloud reſteth upon theſe myſterious ſubjects! Wherefore let our thoughts be rather employed upon themes whoſe knowledge we can better aſcertain. Let the death of our friends reconcile us to the view of our own ſepulchres; and ſince the decree is unavoidable, let us regard life, in the light in which the ancients looked upon it, as a feaſt; and let us depart from table with the ſatisfaction and chearfulneſs of a convivaſatur, of a gueſt pleaſed with his entertainment, and thankful for the comforts of it. Or elſe let us look upon the world as a the-

atre,

atre, when a few years hence it will import us nought, which of us perſonated a ſtateſman, and which of us an inferior character.

But although I have hinted, that there is little on this globe to deſerve our fondneſs, I would nevertheleſs wiſh thee to love me as much as thou canſt, and to reſt aſſured, after all, that thou art not my creditor. And whoſeſoever's lot it ſhall be to quit the ſtage firſt, let him preſerve his former tenderneſs for the ſurvivor. Let him maintain his integrity and friendſhip in a ſeparate ſtate; and if he be indulged the liberty of chooſing his own province, be it that of a guardian angel to his friend below, to lead him gently through the meanders and difficulties of life, and to wait upon the confines of the two worlds to receive and welcome the ſocial ſpirit, when diſlodged hence. Nor entertain one doubt, that we ſhall be at a loſs to find out each other. For congenial ſouls know their mates by intellectual intuition, and ſcorn the mediation of ſenſible organs for the diſcovery of one another.

Dated the eleventh of the tenth moon
of the Chriſtian hegira, 1743.

MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA,

A LEARNED DERVISE.

He diſcourſes on the happineſs of good men, the intricacy of Providence—inquires into the riſe and reaſons of moral and natural evil—accounts for both on the hypotheſis of a future ſtate of retribution—vilifies the pride of man, and makes mention of his Maker in the ſtrongeſt phraſeology of the Orientals—concludes with an exhortation to patience and acquieſcence.

VENERABLE derviſe! thou illuſtrious miſſionary and legate of Allah! may peace with its downy pinions hover around thy dwelling.

Wilt thou permit a ſheep of thy fold to approach thy ſacred receſs, and ſalute the hem of thy veſtment?

I am perplexed with doubts and difficulties, and come to thee for a ſolution. Diſſipate the miſts and fogs of ignorance, that involve my underſtanding; illuminate my benighted mind, and purge my

my intellectual optics, that I may clearly discern the ways of Heaven.

To whom should I apply but to thee, faithful and vigilant shepherd, the oracle of thy district, and the lantern of thy flock? Thou that dispensest the celestial manna with unremitting constancy, oh! satisfy the cravings of a soul, that hungereth and thirsteth after thy instructions.

A Hebrew sultan hath asserted, "that a good man shall be satisfied from himself;" and when thou wast expatiating upon this hallowed aphorism, I verily knew that thou wast speaking experimentally.

Yes, thou treasury of all erudition and virtue! I can believe whatever thou tellest me of the good man. I believe that his soul receiveth pleasure from a thousand avenues. That the spirit of unerring wisdom taketh up his lodging in his breast, and diffuseth a divine serenity and peace. Like a familiar friend, this spirit suppeth with him, and not only partaketh of his meals, but shareth his couch also. Say, happy and sage dervise, for surely thou canst tell this important truth, are any joys wanting, where the bosom is occupied by this heavenly guest? Is not every thought an unison with the suggestions of this illustrious visitant? The harmony of instruments is but a faint resemblance

blance of the harmony of the worthy mind. O! the midnight muſic of ſuch a favourite of Allah! nearly akin to the ſongs of angels, and the golden harps of ſeraphs!

But tell me, thou guardian of thy ſheepfold, is the calm of the good man permanent, and uninterrupted? Doth no doubt about Providence ſpring up ſometimes, and ruffle the ſmooth expanſe of his breaſt? or, like a ſullen cloud, ſhoot athwart the ſky, and deform the peaceful azure? Surely not, for purified ſpirits are as clear of doubts as of guilt. It is the groſs and terrene ſoul, that liveth in ſuch troubled regions. I feel theſe incumbrances of polluted clay, which ſink me down, whenever I attempt to wade the mighty gulph.

Myſterious Providence! an abyſs without a bottom! a ſea without a ſhore! at beſt it is ſuch to the common underſtanding of humanity, not defecated from the dregs of vice and folly. O! that ſome courteous inhabitant of the bright empyrean would deſcend from his high abode, and unveil to us theſe inexplicable arcana! Or are we to remain in darkneſs, till we are ejected theſe tabernacles of fleſh, and become denizens of the fields of light? Theſe bodies of ours are brittle manſions, obnoxious to deſtruction from violence.

But

But if they eſcape forcible contingencies, ſuch is the periſhable nature of their compoſition, that after threeſcore years and ten they are ſeldom tenantable. And who would wiſh for a more durable building, ſince obſcurity, impenetrable obſcurity, reſteth upon theſe earthly cottages? A wiſe man, methinks, would welcome that bliſsful period, which breaks down theſe partition-walls, whereby we are ſo long immured in fleſh and ſenſe.

But to reſume the ſubject of my ſcruples, for I will tell thee all, that thou mayeſt conduct me out of this labyrinth of ambiguities, and lead me to the deciſions of eternal ſapience.

Inſtruct me, I beſeech thee, from what corrupted ſource aroſe moral evil. Thou art well verſed in the ſchools of diſputation; explain therefore to me this problem of intricacy. Some of the Eaſtern philoſophers, and particularly one of the Perſian magi, have adopted into their ſyſtem two principles, the one good, the other evil; and from the exiſtence of Arimanius they deduce a ſolution of theſe difficulties. But how came this wicked dæmon to exiſt, and from what cauſe did he proceed? To ſay that he is co-eternal with almighty Allah is abſurdity and blaſphemy. To affirm he is of later birth, is ſeemingly to queſtion the power and

and goodneſs of the Moſt High, in his thus permitting the exiſtence of a dæmon.

But perhaps thou wilt ſay, that a freedom of will implies a capacity to do good or ill; that without the permiſſion of moral evil, there can be no virtue. I aſk thee, whether ſuch ſteadineſs in rectitude, as precludes every tendency of deviating into obliquity and error, is not preferable to virtue? Is not a Being good by neceſſity, ſuperior to a Being good without the obligation or force of ſuch neceſſity? Are not the angels, for inſtance, perfectly good, becauſe they are utter ſtrangers to iniquity and folly, and above all poſſibility of moral defilement? Perhaps thou wilt reply, that ſublunary worlds are only the theatres of evil, becauſe they are probationary ſtates; and that the world above is the reward and conſummation of virtue. But if the inhabitants of heaven are, or were not probationers formerly, how doſt thou explain the hiſtory of the lapſed angels!

Alas! I am already launched out into an ocean of difficulties, and my fluctuating ſkiff muſt ſuffer wreck, unleſs thou kindly takeſt the ſteerage, and piloteſt me into port.

Shall I ſpeak my ſentiments of what the ſchoolmen call natural evil? I have read their ſolutions, and verily I am ſcandalized at the poverty of their arguments. One, with an affected inſenſibility, denies

nies pain to be an evil. Another tells me, that reaſoning is an infallible antidote to counteract, and remove the ills of affliction. Pitiful ſophiſts indeed! For if this doctrine was true, men of ſmaller capacities, who could not reaſon at all, or reaſon well, muſt be ſuperlatively miſerable. A third tells me, that grief is an idle paſſion, becauſe it cannot call back my departed friend, whoſe loſs, perhaps, I am deploring. But is not this inability a very good reaſon why I ſhould weep? A fourth would huſh my complaints by telling me that ſuch are the laws of the drama that we cannot all be heroes and kings. But ſurely I have a reaſonable objection to the tragedy, when I am ordained the ſuffering party. A fifth, in a more modern ſtrain aſſures me, that the world is a beautiful picture, where contraſts are required to compleat the beauty of the whole. But what comfort can this argument adminiſter to me, who am appointed the contraſt or dark ſhade in the piece? Mere ſophiſtry! Colluſion all! It is only the doctrine of a future retribution that can thoroughly reconcile theſe weighty difficulties.

I know that an ancient and inſpired miſſionary hath reſolved a queſtion of this kind into the ſovereignty of the divine will. But ſome are of opinion, that when he likens the Creator to the potter, and man to the paſſive clay, the apoſtolic doctor

is

is ſpeaking of collective bodies of men, and not of any particular individual. For otherwiſe, this awful doctrine of the ſovereignty of Allah rather ſilences, than ſatisfies the inquiring mind.—Alas! what is man! Is he not a poor, ignorant, and inſufficient animalcule? and when weighed in the ſcales of juſtice, leſs than nothing, and altogether vanity?

And what is that tranſcendent Being, whoſe conduct this reptile ſo frequently and ſo impiouſly arraigns? is he not elevated far above the higheſt conception of men and angels? is he not of that exalted and ſublimated purity, that his very miniſters, who attend neareſt his throne, cherubims of the higheſt rank and primogeniture! are all maculated eſſences in his ſight? while Michael, Gabriel, and Ithuriel, illuſtrious ſeraphs! are compelled to hide their faces with dilated pinions, being unable to abide the coruſcations of his effulgent majeſty!—Father of ſempiternal ages! Parent of light and life! Uncreated, unoriginated beauty! Bright exemplar of all that is fair and lovely! Inexhauſtible ſource of all that is wiſe, great, and good!

Here the ſoul, conſcious of its own nothingneſs, ſhrinks back upon itſelf, and ſhudders at its criminal curioſity. My ſpirit faints within me, oppreſſed with the mighty idea of the godhead. Veiling

Veiling my head in the folds of my garment, I fall proſtrate and adoring, crying out with the moſt fervent emotions, "Juſt and true are thy ways, thou peerleſs majeſty of ineffable glory!"

Doubtleſs the Supreme Being is the beſt of beings; and, although his ways are not to be comprehended by mortals, yet moſt aſſuredly they never ſwerve from the ſevereſt rules of abſolute rectitude. I believe thou wilt adviſe the doubting mind to repoſe itſelf upon this unerring propoſition, and be ſtill. Such an admonition moſt certainly ſavours of wiſdom; for why ſhould the ſons of men attempt to ſearch into the inſcrutables of the Almighty, and diſquiet themſelves in vain? Teach the reſtleſs mind the art of content, and then all ſurmiſes, doubts, and conjectures, will vaniſh into air, and the ſoul will reſt ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of Heaven.

Let us hear the concluſion of the whole matter. It is pride, accompanied with ignorance, that makes a ſceptic; humility and ſelf-knowledge produce reſignation and happineſs.

May thou and I poſſeſs the ſilent joys of acquieſcence. This reſigned frame will act like a ſovereign opiate; and huſh to ſleep every inordinate and turbulent paſſion.

Nor can Gilead boaſt a ſuperior balſam for the wounds of affliction. If we are planted in the ſhade,

ſhade, may we flouriſh in the ſhade! Some plants thrive beſt in ſituations of obſcurity ſeldom viſited by the ſun. Who knows, but that ſuch a retired culture is requiſite to our being tranſplanted hereafter into the garden of Eden. Be it ſo—and let us poſſeſs our ſouls in patience and thankfulneſs here, that when the angel of the grave ſhall remove us hence, he may ſafely diſpoſe of us near the rivers of Paradiſe, where, like the tree of life, we ſhall bloſſom and fructify abundantly, and our leaves never fade.

In the mean time let us ſolace ourſelves with the hopes of this happy period. For ſurely it imports us little, although our way be ſtrewed with weeds and brambles, provided it terminates in the walks and alleys of the garden of God. The world is a wilderneſs, and we are not to expect ſmooth roads, and commodious caravanſaries.

The pointed briar ſhoots its luxuriant branches acroſs the path, and wounds all paſſengers indiſcriminately. Remember that the monarch is as little exempted from this common lot of humanity, as the meaneſt vaſſal.

Adieu, ſage derviſe, and ſince we cannot be more than men, we will not make ourſelves leſs. But like the nightingale we will be chearful and pleaſed, even with the thorn at our breaſt. This alluſion, thou knoweſt, is to a fabulous tradition among

among the naturalists, who report, that this bird repoſes his breaſt every night againſt a thorn, to render him wakeful to ſing.

Dated the twelfth of the eighth moon, 1744.

LETTER I.

Dear Sister,

I Have events of the higheſt importance to communicate to you! ſuch as will quicken every tender and affectionate ſenſation, intermingle terror with joy, and at the ſame time inſpire you with gratitude for the eſcape and recovery of your afflicted and indulgent brother.

But do not think that the following detail of my fears and ſufferings is intended merely to excite your pity and concern. No, my dear, it is more immediately deſigned to put you upon your guard, that ſo you may avoid the wicked artifices of the cruel. And, oh! I have a thouſand cares and anxieties for your ſecurity and welfare.

Laſt night, when I had ſtepped a few paces from my houſe, I diſcovered the moſt ſurpriſing and hideous creature in the whole ſcale of beings. His ſize was enormous, far beyond the conception of thy unexperienced mind. I ſcarcely think, that an entire army of our ſpecies, if blended into one general maſs, would amount to the quantity of matter which was contained in this monſter. But his magnitude, however gigantic, was the leaſt formidable circumſtance attending him. Inſtead of eyes, there appeared to me two flaming furnaces,

naces, which, by their ſituation under the irregular arch which conſtituted his forehead, were certainly the optics of this moſt amazing ſavage. When he opened his mouth, I thought I ſhould have ſwooned away. Language is too faint to expreſs the terrors of his jaws, or the multitude of my fears. When his mouth was extended, I deſcried a cavern of immeaſurable depth, and the lining of this cavern was the colour of ſcarlet. His tongue was indiſputably wider than my whole body; and his teeth were as long and as large as my thigh-bones. His bulk, as I have already intimated, was large even to aſtoniſhment; and he dragged behind him a tail anſwerable in length and thickneſs to a cable. His four legs were like four huge maſſy pillars, and his feet terminated in ſundry frightful claws, each reſembling, in their curvature, a Turkiſh cimeter reverſed.

I viewed this monſter with horror and diſmay. But what do you think were my feelings, when I beheld him making inſidious advances towards me? No ſooner had he approached within a few yards of me, than he couched to the ground, and erecting his bruſhy tail, he waved it to and fro with amazing eaſe and freedom, conſidering its ſtupendous weight. His eyes, methought, flaſhed flakes of fire. But perceiving him to gain upon me, I haſtened with precipitation into my ſubterraneous

manſion. The very moment that I made my retreat, the ſavage gave a bound, and came like thunder upon the roof of my caſtle. I was ſo much ſhocked at theſe occurrences, that I fell into fits, and kept my bed for ſeveral days. Proportionably as my fears abated, ſo my health returned. But this recovery was the occaſion of future evils, the melancholy hiſtory whereof ſhall be reſerved for my next letter.

In the mean while, I beg you to arm your breaſt with fortitude; for the account of my further dangers and diſtreſs will otherwiſe overpower your ſpirits. Indeed my ſtory is ſo very affecting, that there will be required greater firmneſs of mind than what uſually falls to a female's ſhare, to hear the bare relation of my ſorrows without diſſolving into tears.

I am, dear Siſter,
Your moſt affectionate Brother,
MUSCULUS.

LETTER II.

WELL, my deareſt Muſcilla, I hope my former letter was received with all that tenderneſs, which was due to me and my afflictions. But I hope too, that my ſufferings have not

not made injurious impreſſions upon your health. For, to inflict a laſting wound, or even to occaſion my dear ſiſter vapours and melancholy, would render me the moſt miſerable of our ſpecies. If my ſorrows are ſuperior to thoſe of others, ſo is my love to thee, thou brighteſt ornament of thy ſex. But to proceed in my narrative.

After that I was a little recovered, and was picking up my crumbs (as it is called) I began to conſult my appetite, and thought that my ſtomach ſeemed diſpoſed to a delicate piece of Parmeſan. Accordingly, I ſtole out privately, one moon-light night, to a neighbouring cheeſemonger's, where I had formerly made many plentiful meals. As I was ſurveying with vaſt ſatisfaction the variety and dainties of the ſhop, I diſcovered upon the counter a ſtrange kind of building. I queſtion whether its name is to be found in any of the ancient or modern books of architecture. It was formed after the model of a rotunda, and conſiſted of an infinite number of iron bars cloſely ſet together, and all running parallel to the horizon; with a few perpendicular columns that ſuſtained and connected together theſe circular bars. The gate, or rather the opening, was placed in the ſummit. A very aukward entrance, you'll ſay; and believe me, a very dangerous one too, as I found afterwards by

woful experience. From this aperture I ſaw a large quantity of meal lying looſe on the floor of the building; which circumſtance led me to think, that it was intended for a granary or ſtorehouſe. As I had already gratified the cravings of my appetite, I choſe to poſtpone the treaſures of this magazine for a future banquet; for I am (as my dear ſiſter well knows) an utter enemy to the voluptuary and glutton. A few nights afterwards I repeated my viſit to the cheeſemonger's, and, ſpringing upon the counter, I had a full view of the iron meal-houſe. My ſtomach at that period being delicate, and my digeſtion ſomewhat impaired by the richneſs of the Parmeſan, I judged it prudent to vary my diet; and therefore determined to regale myſelf with the contents of that curious repoſitory which I have juſt now deſcribed.

In purſuance of this reſolution, I ſcaled the wall of the building, and entering at the opening in the ſummit, I deſcended with eaſe to the bottom, where I ſupped with moderation and contentment. After ſome time, I began to think of retiring to my own home. But judge of my conſternation, when I caſt my eyes upwards, and found my retreat precluded by a hundred ſwords pointing towards me.

In

In order to explain this myſtery, it will be neceſſary that I expatiate more largely on the conſtruction of the edifice.

The aperture at the top was formed after this manner. There was a large iron hoop, the center as it were of all the circular and perpendicular bars already deſcribed. From this hoop proceeded a vaſt number of ſtrait pikes, with their extremities tending downwards and terminating at a conſiderable diſtance from the floor. As they advanced downwards they likewiſe kept advancing nearer to each other, in this reſpect reſembling the termination of a funnel; leaving ſpace ſufficient for my entrance. But by the deſcription now given, you will readily conceive, that the points of theſe pikes, like the points of ſo many ſwords, prevented my egreſs from this priſon. I was now too ſenſible of my error, condemned my curioſity, and gave myſelf up for loſt. And oh! what a night of horrors did I paſs! But indeed far greater horrors were ſtill in reſerve for me. In the morning, when the maſter of the ſhop had diſcovered his priſoner, he called a council of his houſe; and they, without hearing what I had to ſay in my defence, unanimouſly adjudged me guilty of felony, and ſentenced me to death. You will eaſily imagine the exceſſive perturbation of my ſpirits, when I heard the irrevocable decree

paſſed upon me. But what a thouſand additional terrors did I ſuffer, when I was acquainted with the manner of my execution! In a few minutes the four-legged ſavage, mentioned formerly, was brought into the ſhop, and I was forthwith to be delivered into the paws of this mercileſs enemy. Accordingly my priſon was lifted from the counter, when ſuddenly the treacherous floor gave way, and I fell into the claws of the monſter. He catched me with ſuch violence, that he drove two of his talons into my ſides, and thereby fractured my ribs. He then cruelly ſported with my agonies; and thinking it was impoſſible that I could eſcape, he retired to a little diſtance from me, and ſmiled, or rather grinned with all the malignant complacency of a dæmon.

During this ſhort interval, I had ſenſe enough remaining to meditate flight. Preſently I deſcried a breach in the wall of the ſhop, which breach was ample enough to admit me, and ſmall enough to exclude my adverſary. Whereupon I ſummoned up all the ſhattered remains of my ſtrength and ſpirits, and with one effort happily gained that favourable ſanctuary. Long I lay languiſhing with my wounds; but in proceſs of time my bones coaleſced, my ſores healed, and my ſtrength returned.

I do

I do not doubt but that your tender and compaſſionate heart will bleed at this melancholy recital of my woes. Let your brother's misfortunes teach you this inſtructive and important leſſon—that when we riot in plenty and ſecurity, then danger and death are at the door. Improve theſe hints, live, and be happy.

I am,

My deareſt ſiſter's

Moſt affectionate brother,

MUSCULUS.

March 20, 1750.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

ECCLESIASTES,

CHAP. xii. *to* VERSE 8.

VERSE 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them.*

IN the earlier part of thy life, think frequently upon thy Creator. Remember, that thou art indebted to him, not for thy exiſtence only, but likewiſe for the continued preſervation, and the various comforts of thy being. Be ſure therefore to teſtify thy gratitude for ſuch high obligations by conſecrating the bloom and ſtrength of thy youth to Almighty God. This is aſſuredly the period of thy moſt acceptable ſervices. Wherefore do not poſtpone the diſcharge of religious duties to more advanced life; becauſe at that period infirmities, pains, and ſorrows ſhall imbitter the remainder of thy

thy days, and render exiſtence itſelf an almoſt inſupportable burthen.

VERSE 2. *While the ſun, or the light, or the moon, or the ſtars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.*

Conſider further, that not only the body is enervated by age, but that the intellectual faculties, thoſe luminaries of the microcoſm, are likewiſe impaired. The underſtanding is darkened, the memory debilitated, and the active powers of the mind become cold, languid, and enfeebled; or perverſe, reſtive, and reluctant to all the exerciſes of religion. The judgment is the light of man, it is that which irradiates, guides, and directs his ſteps. If this ſun of the mental ſyſtem is obſcured by old age, how great is our darkneſs! and how incapable are we rendered hereby of all religious purſuits!

Let me add alſo, that beſides theſe natural obſtacles, ariſing from deficient powers both of body and mind, there are very many contingent impediments to our duty. I mean thoſe outward troubles and afflictions which accompany human life in general, and which are uſually multiplied in proportion to the number of years that a man ſojourns upon earth. Hence it is that towards the cloſe of our days, we find diſappointments, griefs, and ſorrows

rows ariſe in a quick ſucceſſion, like returning clouds in a wet ſeaſon.

VERSE 3. *In the day when the keepers of the houſe ſhall tremble, and the ſtrong men ſhall bow themſelves, and the grinders ceaſe becauſe they are few, and thoſe that look out of the windows be darkened.*

But as the early ſurrender of our hearts to God, and the ſteady application of our minds to his ſervice, is a matter of ſuch vaſt conſequence, it may not be amiſs to examine with greater preciſion thoſe particular lets and hindrances to our duty which are the effects of age. Now theſe impediments will appear evident, from a ſcrutiny into thoſe evils which advanced years bring upon the human ſyſtem.

Thoſe hands, which ſhould be frequently lifted up in prayer to God, being weakened by age, hang down and tremble. They are even diſabled from earning proviſion for the body, or defending it againſt external injuries. At the ſame time the ribs, and the ſtronger bones of the thighs and legs, which once gave ſtrength, rectitude, and ſtability to the whole fabric, and which, in conjunction with the back-bone, connected and held together the ſeveral parts of the edifice; theſe ſtrong and mighty

mighty ſupports, I ſay, are all relaxed or bowed down by age, and foretell the approaching fall of the ſuperſtructure.

The teeth likewiſe, in advanced years, become diſabled from diſcharging their office by a decay of their ſubſtance, or loſs of their number. Hence the aliment is not properly broken, and divided, and prepared for the ſtomach. From which cauſe a multitude of ills ariſe to the ſyſtem in general. For the food being imperfectly acted upon by the teeth, is alſo imperfectly acted upon afterwards by the ſtomach. Whence proceed indigeſtion, obſtructions, and a default of nouriſhment through the various parts and members of the body.

The defect of viſion is another concomitant evil of old age. The eyes, thoſe valuable organs, ſo eſſentially neceſſary not only to the comforts and pleaſures of life, but alſo to the ſecurity and preſervation of man, are incapacitated by length of years from performing their important functions. Thoſe windows of the building are darkened by films or defluxions; and the ſoul is, as it were, precluded from looking out at theſe obſtructed caſements. Whence it follows, that as from the decay of our ſtrength we are diſqualified for the active duties of religion, ſo from the diminution of our ſight, we can make no freſh acquiſitions to our knowledge by the writings of others; and thereby

thereby cannot recal or quicken paſt ideas and notices of our duty.

VERSE 4. *And the doors ſhall be ſhut in the ſtreets when the ſound of the grinding is low, and he ſhall riſe up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of muſic ſhall be brought low.*

But to return once more to thoſe inſtruments, which firſt prepare and diſpoſe the food for its advantageous reception in the ſtomach. Becauſe, ſince our very being depends upon the ſuſtenance we receive, and its due diſtribution through all the parts of the body, we can eaſily infer that the entire loſs or deſtruction of our teeth muſt cauſe a great diminution of ſtrength and vigour to the whole ſyſtem.

That old age deprives us of theſe ſmaller bones is too obvious a truth to be expatiated upon. And, beſides the unhappy conſequences already enumerated, an additional difficulty immediately preſents itſelf to our view. The gums at this period are to perſonate the province of the teeth. But the ſmoothneſs of their ſurfaces renders them very unfit for this work. Hence what pains and labour are aged men obliged to take, before they can bruiſe and ſoften their food ſufficiently for the purpoſes of the ſtomach. At the ſame time the lips, thoſe portals of the mouth, are kept conſtantly

ſhut

ſhut during the action of the jaws, leſt the morſel, through loſs of the teeth to withhold it, ſhould be protruded and fall out.

Another melancholy effect of old age is a deficiency of ſleep, whereby the ſtrength and ſpirits are further impaired. The old man often awakens at the crowing of the cock, and is incapable of obtaining repeated ſlumbers. Whereas the child, or the man of middle age, can perpetuate his ſleep almoſt at will.

Notice hath already been taken of defective viſion. But the organs of hearing are likewiſe great ſufferers by age. Thoſe daughters of muſic, who, by their exquiſite delicacy of ſenſation, and ſkill in melodious principles, formerly reduced ſounds into harmony for the pleaſure of themſelves and others, are now brought into the loweſt eſtate, and are no longer in a capacity of anſwering the ordinary purpoſes of their ſtructure.

VERSE 5. *Alſo, when they ſhall be afraid of that which is high, and fears ſhall be in the way, and the almond-tree ſhall flouriſh, and the graſshopper ſhall be a burden, and deſire ſhall fail: becauſe man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the ſtreets.*

But however material and weighty all theſe evils may be, there is ſtill a longer and heavier train

of calamities, which aſſociate themſelves with advanced years.

Whereas youth is bold, valiant, and regardleſs of danger, age is quite the reverſe of this character. In every action the ancient man diſcovers diffidence, irreſolution, and timidity. In all his ſhort excurſions abroad, he treads with warineſs and diſtruſt. After painful aſcending an eminence, he is ſeized with a temporary giddineſs; and in his return, he trembles at every pebble in the path, leſt his ſtrength prove inſufficient for theſe trifling obſtacles, and a fall enſue. Thus fears and terrors are attendants upon the ſteps of that man, whoſe grey hairs reſemble the whitening bloſſoms of the almond-tree; and to whom, from the decline of his ſtrength, even the graſshopper, that light and inconſiderable inſect, becomes a burden. Add to all this, a diſreliſh of every ſcene around him, from the failure of deſire, and the decay of his other paſſions. Yet all theſe inconveniences and ills are inſeparable from humanity; becauſe man is born to die, and age is the harbinger of death. To enforce this truth by argument, would be an inſult offered to the underſtandings of men, while funerals and mourning relatives are frequently darkening the ſtreets.

From what hath been already ſaid upon the weakneſs, infirmities, and diſeaſes of advanced life,

life, the expediency as well as the duty of early religion muſt appear abundantly evident. However, as the human body is a complicated ſtructure, and as little more than the external parts of the building have been conſidered at preſent, let us carry our reſearches further, and examine what is doing in the more private and retired chambers of this wonderful fabric.

VERSE 6. *Or ever the ſilver cord be looſed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the ciſtern.*

Here we ſhall be aſtoniſhed at the ſtupendous diſplays of Almighty wiſdom, power, and goodneſs. Know then, that there are ſcattered up and down in the human body, and indeed in all animal bodies, a multitude of white cords, to which anatomiſts have given the appellation of nerves. Theſe ſtrings are the immediate inſtruments of ſenſation and motion. For if a nerve, which leads to any part, be tied hard, or cut aſunder, that part to which this nerve belonged inſtantly loſes all feeling, and becomes deſtitute of action.

From the brain, which is the ſource of the whole nervous ſyſtem, there proceeds through the whole length of the back-bone, in a cavity curiouſly formed for its reception and ſecurity, a

cord of an enlarged ſize, which, on account of its reſplendent whiteneſs, may aptly be compared to the complexion of burniſhed ſilver. From this cord ariſe thirty pairs of ſmaller ſtrings, which are diſtributed along the arms, thighs, legs, and trunk of the body. Now in old age this ſilver cord is very liable to be relaxed and weakened, or a part thereof to be altogether broken in its functions; as appears from thoſe paralytic complaints to which elderly perſons are peculiarly ſubject. When a relaxation of this cord prevails, then tremors are the conſequence; when the canals which compoſe this cord are quite obſtructed, then follow complete palſies, or in other words, an entire deprivation of ſenſe and motion. Ought we not therefore to remember our Creator in the prior ſtages of life, before this melancholy period of deficient ſenſation and action arrives? for a palſy is partial death, and generally portends the ſpeedy diſſolution of the whole building.

But, agreeably to what hath already been ſuggeſted, the brain is the origin of the nerves. And thoſe nerves which are beſtowed upon the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and all the other parts of the face and head, iſſue immediately from the brain itſelf, through ſmall holes in the ſcull, deſigned for the tranſmiſſion of theſe little cords. Any diſorder happening to theſe nerves, and interrupting

rupting their functions, will occasion, according to the degree of the disease, dimness of sight, or total loss of vision; heaviness of hearing, or absolute deafness; defective speech, or an utter incapacity of speaking; will deprive the lips in part or altogether of their due motions; and likewise impair or annihilate the smell and the taste.

What an amazing organ is the brain! that source and parent of all motion and sensation! that inexplicable repository of the understanding of man! How curious its texture, how tender its substance, and of what vast importance to the whole system! For which reason, the all-wise Creator hath securely lodged it in a strong citadel of bone, which, from its circular cavity, and the inestimable value of its treasures, may with propriety be styled the golden bowl.

Now, it is observable, that in the extremity of old age, this golden bowl, and more especially the contents thereof, are highly injured. The several parts of the brain, through length of time, become unfit for their various offices. It is like an exquisitely wrought machine with complicated movements; a long succession of years breaks, wears out, and dissolves this surprizing workmanship: wherefore, it must be the highest folly to defer the consideration of our eternal interests till the winter of life comes upon us, when we are

unqualified for the common intercourſes of ſociety, and even for the ordinary actions of animal life.

But additional motives for early religion will reſult from a ſcrutiny into the effects which age occaſions to the heart, and to the great pipes that proceed from this fountain of life. We ought moſt aſſuredly to ſecure the favour of our Maker before theſe great canals, which iſſue from the heart, and receive (like pitchers at a well) the contents of this ſpring, grow incapable of diſcharging their office aright. For it is an inconteſtable truth, that in elderly men theſe grand conduits, which receive the blood from the heart, in order to circulate it through the lungs, the brain, and all the organs and members of the body, become bony, rigid, and inflexible; whereby they are diſabled from acting upon the blood, and driving it through all the fine veſſels of the ſyſtem. Hence thoſe languors, faintings, and ſudden changes which are diſcoverable ſo frequently in perſons much advanced in years.

But even the heart itſelf, that ciſtern of the whole building, which receives and diſpenſes to the moſt diſtant extremities in an appropriated period of time, every particle of blood belonging to the body; I ſay, this great reſervoir is rendered by old age unfit for this important charge. Part of its ſubſtance, like the great canals already mentioned, degenerate

degenerate into bony fibres, which are unable to perform their due action; for the heart propels the blood to the extreme parts by a contractile power. If this contractile force is abated by the hardneſs and inflexibility of the heart's ſubſtance, it is apparent that the circulation of the blood cannot be properly carried on; but momentary ſtagnations, ſinkings of ſpirits, and univerſal weakneſs will follow; becauſe this power of contraction, like the wheel of a water engine, is the grand and principal cauſe of the diſtribution of the fluid through all the numerous channels of the ſyſtem.—This is a true, though uncomfortable repreſentation of the animal œconomy in the decline of life; and whoever attentively ſurveys this picture, and acts anſwerably to the admonitions which it ſuggeſts, will be ſolicitous to acquaint themſelves with God from their youth; they will dedicate themſelves to their great Creator in the early ſtages of life; and by ſo doing may, towards the cloſe of it, with a humble and reaſonable confidence, hope that God will not deſert them when they are become old and grey-headed.

Every ſerious and thinking man muſt be convinced, that the conſecrating the prime of his days and the vigour of his ſtrength to Heaven, is both wiſdom and piety; for what can all his ſervices avail him, under the corporeal imbecilities, mental failures, and the many incidental evils of extreme

age? To all procraſtinating votaries will not the prophet's interrogatory be very appoſite? "If ye "offer the blind for ſacrifice, is it not evil? And "if ye offer the lame and the ſick, is it not evil? "Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be "pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon, ſaith the "Lord of hoſts?"

VERSE 7. *Then ſhall the duſt return to the earth as it was, and the ſpirit ſhall return to God, who gave it.*

But it muſt be alſo noticed, that theſe deficiencies and decays of the ſyſtem are the immediate forerunners of its diſſolution; that when this great change befalls us, the materials of which our bodies are compoſed, ſhall be reſolved into earth, from whence they were taken; and our ſouls, which animated theſe organiz'd particles of duſt, ſhall return to God the father and judge of our ſpirits, who will reward or puniſh us according to our deeds in the fleſh. This is an argument of infinite weight, and far ſuperior to any hitherto urged for the remembering our Creator in the days of our youth: which advice, if we ſedulouſly purſue, we ſhall have no ſuffering to fear, but every joy to hope for, "when "God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with "every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whe-"her it be evil."

SERMON

SERMON II.

St. JOHN'S GOSPEL,

CHAP. xi. VERSES 25 *and* 26.

Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live.

And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die.

THERE was at Bethany (a village within two miles of Jeruſalem) a happy family, whom our Lord had honoured with diſtinguiſhed marks of his affection and friendſhip. This family conſiſted of a brother and two ſiſters. Lazarus, which was the name of the brother, laboured under a diſtemper which threatened danger. His ſiſters Martha and Mary, being very anxious for his life, ſent a meſſenger to Jeſus, who was then in the country beyond Jordan, to acquaint him with the ſickneſs of his friend Lazarus, and to entreat his perſonal aſſiſtance. When our Lord had received the intelligence, he declared to his diſciples, that the diſtemper ſhould not terminate in the final removal of Lazarus out of this world, but that his temporary deceaſe ſhould occaſion an illuſtrious manifeſtation of the power of God, and at the

ſame time ſhould inconteſtably prove the divine miſſion of the Meſſiah, the Son of God.

The Evangeliſt obſerves, that Jeſus entertained a very affectionate regard for this amiable family. But, notwithſtanding his kind attachment to Lazarus, it is ſaid, that "he abode two days ſtill in the "ſame place where he was." St. John might deſign to intimate, that our Lord forbore to haſten to Bethany, becauſe the great length of time which intervened between the death and reſurrection of Lazarus, muſt preclude all poſſibility of doubt touching the fact of his deceaſe; and alſo, that our Lord's abſence removed every ſuſpicion of fraud and artifice, and furniſhed him with an opportunity of diſplaying his divine power in the raiſing of his friend from the dead.

At the expiration of two days, Jeſus ſat out for Bethany; and was no ſooner come into the neighbourhood of the afflicted family, than the news of his approach reached Martha, who immediately haſtened to meet him. Her ſiſter Mary, unacquainted with our Lord's arrival, ſat weeping in the houſe with her mourning friends.

When Martha had found Jeſus, ſhe brake out into this plaintive exclamation of ſorrow, "Lord! "if THOU hadſt been *here* my brother had *not* "*died*." Upon our reading this paſſionate expreſſion of grief, we are naturally led to wonder, how

Martha,

Martha, who had been intimately acquainted with our Lord, his doctrines and miracles, could poſſibly imagine, that the actual preſence of Jeſus was neceſſary to ſave her brother from death.

Had ſhe never heard of our Lord's recovery of the Centurion's ſervant? or of the cure of the Nobleman's ſon at the diſtance of Cana from Capernaum? Had ſhe never received any information of his ſpeaking the Ruler's daughter into life, or of the reſtoration of the Widow's ſon from the dead? Or if it be urged, that Jeſus was preſent when he reſcued theſe two inſtances from the grave, can we ſuppoſe that Martha really believed his immediate preſence to be more eſſentially neceſſary for the reſtoration of the dead, than for the recovery of the diſtant ſick? Perhaps a reflection upon the nature of exceſſive ſorrow will furniſh us with the moſt natural ſolution of theſe difficulties. It is uſual for immoderate grief to chain the mind down to the particular object of its attention, and to preclude all due exertions of thought; to vent its feelings in imperfect ſentences, and in tender reproaches of friendſhip, and upon ſudden conviction to recollect itſelf, and ſilence its own emotions. This appears to be the true caſe of Martha's ſenſations. She had with warmth inſinuated to our Lord, that her brother's death was occaſioned by the noncompliance of Jeſus with the meſſage ſhe had ſent him

of

of her brother's danger, and of her importunate desire of his speedy return to Bethany. But although she had told him, in the fullness of her heart, that if he had been there, her brother had not died; yet she appears to have recovered her better sentiments, before she had finished her speech; because she instantly subjoined, "I know, "that EVEN NOW, whatsoever thou wilt ask of "God, God will give it thee."

Some little difficulty attends this passage. Did Martha harbour any faint hopes, that Jesus would restore her brother to life again? This expression of her faith seems to imply as much; and yet the subsequent verses carry a different import. For when Jesus told her, that her brother should rise again, she acknowledged the truth of his divine assertion; but she discovered no expectations of his resurrection prior to the general resurrection at the LAST DAY. And although our Lord had suggested to her strong intimations of an earlier resurrection; yet, upon our Lord's approach to the grave of Lazarus, and commanding the stone which covered it to be removed, Martha is represented as the only person who remonstrated against so seemingly unnecessary an undertaking. And, as the reason of her objection, she urged the present putrefaction of her brother's body. What then could be her meaning, when she said, "But I

" know, that even now, whatſoever thou wilt aſk " of God, God will give it thee?" Perhaps all this obſcurity is likewiſe to be reſolved into the paſſion of violent ſorrow; which oftentimes ſtands convicted, and nevertheleſs acts contrary to its own convictions.

Thus it is very common for a man under a ſevere affliction, to believe one minute, and the next diſbelieve, any intelligence that makes for his comfort. Theſe are the natural contrarieties of the human breaſt; and, if properly attended to, will account for Martha's conduct in the ſtory before us. It is more than probable, that when Jeſus told her, her brother ſhould riſe again, there preſented to her mind ſome glimmering confuſed expectations of our Lord's working ſome extraordinary miracle for the conſolation of herſelf and her ſiſter; but that ſhe could not conceive any explicit ideas of ſuch comfort, is very evident from the verſes I have already recited. She appears to be no ways appriſed that our Lord, by any power inherent in HIM, COULD raiſe Lazarus from the dead. This miſtake our Lord rectifies in the ſubſequent verſe; " Jeſus ſaid unto her, *I* am the RESURRECTION " and the LIFE; he that believeth in me, though " he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever " liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die." That is, I am the author of the reſurrection, and of the life ſubſequent to the reſurrection: where-

fore

fore I am capable of raiſing the dead at any period ANTECEDENT to the general reſurrection. "He "that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet "ſhall he" come to life again, provided it be my will and pleaſure to call him from the grave. "And whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me," though by nature he is ſubjected to death, yet ſhall he not die, if I think proper to prevent him from dying. Believeſt thou this, Martha? Art thou thoroughly perſuaded by this aſſertion of mine, that ſuch an abſolute plenitude of power reſideth in me?

The uſual explanation of this paſſage is as follows:—I am the author of the reſurrection and giver of life. Faith in me ſhall occaſion the dead to live hereafter, and ſuch as live by faith ſhall not continue under the power of death.—Though theſe verſes will admit of ſuch a commentary, and indeed will admit of no other amongſt us, ſince miracles have ceaſed; yet the preceding interpretation appears to be our Lord's preciſe meaning, when conſidered as a reply to what Martha had immediately ſaid before: "I know that my bro-"ther ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt "day." As ſhe had actually declared her belief of the reſurrection of her brother at the laſt day, there was no room for our Lord to add, after what he had ſaid, "Believeſt thou this?" And that our Lord's words imported more than the reſurrection

reſurrection of Lazarus at the day of judgment, is very evident, both from the remonſtrance of Jeſus againſt the objection of Martha to removing the ſtone which covered the ſepulchre, and from the very miracle itſelf of the reſurrection of Lazarus. Martha had ſaid that her brother's body was putrefied; but Jeſus rejoined, "Said I not unto "thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldſt "ſee the glory of God?"

The Evangeliſt informs us, that after Jeſus had put the interrogatory to Martha, relative to his ability of raiſing her brother, ſhe immediately replied in the affirmative, and acknowledged him to be the Meſſiah inveſted with Almighty power.

After this declaration of her faith and confidence in Jeſus, ſhe haſtened to her ſiſter Mary, and acquainted her that their divine Maſter was arrived, and was making tender enquiries after her; whereupon ſhe aroſe up quickly, and went unto Jeſus. But ſeveral of the Jews, ſuſpecting that ſhe was going to the grave to weep over her departed brother, immediately followed her, in order to calm the tumultuous agonies of her grief; by which means they became ſpectators and witneſſes of the ſtupendous miracle which Jeſus afterwards performed.

As ſoon as Mary was come into our Lord's preſence, ſhe proſtrated herſelf at his feet, and with ſtreaming

ſtreaming eyes, ſaid to him, as Martha had done before; "Lord, if THOU hadſt been HERE, my "BROTHER HAD NOT DIED." The compaſſionate Jeſus, moved by her tears, and by the ſorrows of her aſſociates, fetched deep ſighs, and painfully ſympathized with the afflicted mourners. He then interrogated them about the place where they had interred Lazarus; they deſired him to accompany them to the tomb of the deceaſed. Upon this occaſion, he ſubjected himſelf to all the tender emotions of humanity, and wept greatly. Some of the Jews, who beheld his tears, could not refrain from noticing the ſtrength of his affection for Lazarus; while others reproached him with the want of power to prevent the death of his friend, and called into queſtion the reality of the cure which he had performed upon the blind man during the feaſt of tabernacles. Jeſus obſerving their wicked reflections, and obſtinate incredulity, repeated his groans, as he was advancing to the ſepulchre. It was a cave hewn in a rock, and a ſtone lay upon it. After he had commanded the ſtone to be withdrawn, and had addreſſed himſelf to his heavenly Father, in a prayer of thankſgiving for the Divine power committed unto him, he cried out with a loud and authoritative voice, "Lazarus, come forth. And he "that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot

"with

" with grave cloaths: and his face was bound about " with a napkin. Jeſus ſaith unto them, looſe " him, and let him go."

To comprehend this miracle in its full force, it may be expedient to remark, that it was a cuſtom with ſome of the eaſtern nations, before they depoſited their dead in the ſepulchre, to ſwathe the corpſe in many rolls or linen bandages. After this manner was Lazarus wrapped when he was laid in his grave: wherefore, when Lazarus came forth, he did not come forward with a progreſſive motion, or as a man walketh; but he advanced like a ſtatue, borne into the midſt of the crowd by an inviſible hand. For, had he ſtepped out of the tomb in the common method of human motion, there had been no occaſion for our Lord to ſay, " Looſe him, and let him go." Beſides, the unbelieving Jews would certainly have cavilled at ſuch a manner of egreſs, and moſt probably would have thence taken an opportunity of ſaying, that Lazarus had concealed himſelf in the ſepulchre to abet our Lord's pretenſions to miraculous power. Whereas the fact, taken in all its circumſtances, places the death of Lazarus beyond the power of doubt. Jeſus ordered him to be LOOSED, and thereby permitted him to return to his own family. As much as if our Lord had ſaid, I will not reſt the weight and credit of this miracle ſole-

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ly upon the atteſtation of the SIGHT of the multitude; for this ſenſe may be objected againſt as liable to impoſition and deception. But do you, who are now preſent, receive the convictions ariſing from your FEELING. Apply your to the bandages, which ſo ſtraitly infold the body and limbs of Lazarus, and then ſay, whether it be poſſible for him, under ſuch ligatures and reſtrictions, to come forth from the grave without a divine interpoſition.

Having thus explained as much of this chapter as bears any immediate connection with my text, I ſhall now proceed to the improvement of thoſe words of our bleſſed Lord, "I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, "though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me, ſhall never "die."

Agreeably to what I have already hinted, this paſſage, ſo far as it relates to us, is to be interpreted thus:—I am the author of the reſurrection and the giver of eternal life. Faith in me ſhall occaſion the dead to live hereafter; and whoſoever liveth by faith ſhall not continue under the power of death.

Firſt. This glorious doctrine of a happy futurity in the world to come, hath a natural tendency to adjuſt and regulate our eſtimate of the things of

this

this life. The man who looks upon himſelf as a candidate for immortality; or, in the phraſe of the apoſtle, the man, WHOSE CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN, cannot over-rate the honours, pleaſures, and profits of this world. For were their real value far ſuperior even to our moſt elevated notions thereof, yet the good man knows, that they are lighter than the duſt upon the balance, when compared with the happineſs of the celeſtial ſtate. But in truth, the joys of this world are acknowledged, by thoſe who abound moſt in them, to be diſproportionate to the expectations of the poſſeſſors. If they be inferior in degree, and ſlow in ſucceſſion, then they ſoon become inſipid, and pall upon our ſenſe. If they be of a tumultuous and riotous nature, then they exhauſt our ſpirits, and leave an inſupportable languor behind them. But beſides the inſufficiency and ſatiety of all ſublunary comforts, the uncertaintainty of their continuance depreciates likewiſe their value. They are as unſtable as the winds or the waves; and therefore are deſtitute of that permanency which is neceſſary to conſtitute true happineſs.

If theſe deficiencies be confeſſed, even by the voluptuary and the ſenſualiſt, in what a very derogatory light muſt the pleaſures of this world appear to the exalted mind of a Chriſtian, who is daily contraſting their emptineſs, brevity, and inſtability,

with the plenitude, excellence, and eternity of thoſe pleaſures, which are "at the right hand of "God!"

But, as the enlightened Chriſtian can, of all men, alone aſcertain the exact worth of terreſtrial comforts, ſo it is he only who can properly enjoy them.

The thoughts of death muſt frequently interfere with the delights of that man who places his felicity in the things of this life. Agreeably to the judicious obſervation of the wiſe ſon of Sirach, "Oh death! how bitter is the remembrance of "thee, to a man who lives at reſt in his poſſeſ-"ſions; unto the man who hath nothing to vex "him, and who hath proſperity in all things!" Upon men of this complexion, every memento of mortality will, in a greater or leſs degree, have the ſame effect, as the hand-writing on the wall had upon the Babylonian monarch, "whoſe coun-"tenance was changed, and whoſe thoughts trou-"bled him; ſo that the joints of his loins were looſ-"ed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another."

Indeed it appears almoſt an impoſſibility for any of us to have the thorough taſte and enjoyment of pleaſures, which either may be taken away from us unexpectedly, or from which we may be unexpectedly removed. And reflections upon ſuch precarioufneſs of tenure will often

crowd

crowd into our minds, notwithſtanding our moſt ſolicitous endeavours to bar the door againſt them. We may be frequently ſhifting ſcenes, may fly from one amuſement to another, and endeavour to loſe ourſelves amidſt riot and diſſipation; but remembrances of our mortality will often preſent themſelves to our reluctant conſciences, ſuggeſt the moſt mortifying leſſons, and intermingle our cups with wormwood and gall.

Now, let us take a ſurvey of the breaſt of that man, who looks upon this world only as a paſſage to a better—who knows, "that when the earth-"ly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, he hath "a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, "eternal in the heavens"—who is perfectly ſatisfied of a glorious reverſion hereafter, even of an inheritance among the ſaints in life, "uncor-"ruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Shall not ſuch a man have a more undiſturbed poſſeſſion, and a truer reliſh of the good things of this world, than he who is ſure of being taken away from them, ſooner or later, and when this period happens, is likewiſe ſure of being undone, having nothing to hope for beyond the grave. You will obſerve, that the fears of death muſt unavoidably ſpoil the pleaſures of that perſon, whoſe expectations terminate with his mortal exiſtence.

Whereas the ſincere and pious Chriſtian, who firmly believes a reſurrection unto eternal life, hath nothing to fear from the hand of death, and therefore nothing to blunt the edge, or impair the reliſh of allowable pleaſures. On the contrary, to ſuch a perſon the word *dying* carries a gainful notion in it, importing delights infinitely preferable to all the joys of fleſh and ſenſe. But I ſhall proceed to a more important improvement.

Secondly. The well-grounded aſſurances of a bleſſed immortality are our beſt ſupports under every afflictive providence. Many and weighty are the calamities of this life; and miſerable will that man be who flatters himſelf with an imaginary exemption from them; or who hath made no proviſion againſt the days of ſorrow and extremity. Surpriſe and unpreparedneſs will quicken his ſufferings, and render his afflictions additionally heavy. Philoſophy hath framed a variety of ſchemes to ſuſtain the ſoul under the preſſures of adverſity; but to every ſyſtem we may with great propriety apply that emphatical paſſage of the prophet Iſaiah: "The bed is ſhorter than that a man can ſtretch "himſelf on it, and the covering narrower than "that he can wrap himſelf in it." The utmoſt that can be ſaid of the very beſt of ſuch ſyſtems is this, that they SILENCE rather than ſatisfy the human mind.

But are there no other resources than those of philosophy? no other comforts than what are reached out to us by the COLD hand of reason? Let us then turn our eyes to religion, and ask whether "there be no balm in Gilead" to mollify the wounds and bruises of affliction? Yes, the prospect which Christianity affords of a happy immortality is a sovereign medicine for the greatest evils that can possibly befal us. He who knows that his sufferings are but momentary, and that they will work out for him an exceeding weight of glory, can never sink under his burden, or repine at the dispensations of Providence.

Our martyrology would have been scanty, and never have amounted to a glorious army, if the hopes of a resurrection to immortal life had not animated those persecuted worthies. For these blessed expectations they not only sacrificed every worldly interest, but even chearfully submitted to poverty, torture, and death. If then those illustrious saints could sustain such fiery trials by the hopes of a joyful resurrection, shall not this divine doctrine enable us to possess our souls in patience and thankfulness under very inferior sorrows, graciously intermingled with comforts? Alas! what are the distresses which we undergo, compared with the sufferings of the primitive martyrs? The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, assures

us, that the champions of religion "had trials of "cruel mockings and ſcourging, bonds, and im- "priſonments; that they wandered in deſerts "and mountains, and in dens and caves of the "earth; that they were even ſtoned, ſawn aſunder, "and ſlain with the ſword." Can the moſt afflicted of us all ſtand forth and ſay, that theſe cruelties are our portion? Hath any calamity befallen us, but ſuch as is common to man? And although it is very true that many of the afflictions incident to humanity are very ſevere, and overmatches for our ſtrength, unaſſiſted by religion, yet they are greatly unequal to the ſufferings of the primitive Chriſtians; and therefore, if the hopes of a future life and immortality are incapable of ſupporting us under ſorrows leſs painful and leſs weighty, it is evident that the fault muſt lie at our doors; that ſuch deficiency is not imputable to the doctrine of the reſurrection, but to the weakneſs of our faith. Indeed the very beſt of us all are too much attached to this world; and hence it happens, that when diſappointment and troubles ariſe, we are precluded thoſe comforts, which reſult from a more intimate connection with things above.

Thirdly and laſtly. This divine truth, of a reſurrection to everlaſting life, is the only refuge of our agonizing ſouls at the hour of death.

Mankind may ſpeak as favourably as they pleaſe of their exiſtence terminating with their preſent being, but annihilation is a ſubject which the human mind ſhudders at, and is the pitiful *beggarly* reſort of the deſpairing ſinner. Could we look into the *believer's* breaſt, when the pains of death have encompaſſed him, ſuch an inſpection would diſcover the triumphant exultation of the Chriſtian over mortality and the grave. How glorious are thoſe hopes which can ſupport the ſoul amidſt the convulſions of diſſolving nature, diſpel the horrors of anxiety, and irradiate the dark valley of death!

Will riches avail us at that awful period? or will titles then ſtand the diſtinguiſhed character in any ſtead? The poverty of wealth, and the littleneſs of honour, never appear ſo conſpicuous as in the dying hour. How infinitely valuable, therefore, muſt be thoſe principles, which can afford us comfort when we ſtand moſt in need of it; can adminiſter it, when all the acquiſitions of this world are incapable of doing ſo; and can ſupply us with ſuch conſolations as ſhall be abundantly adequate to that dreadful extremity!

But our Lord hath aſſured us, that to him only we are indebted for our reſurrection to eternal happineſs. Should we not then moſt ſolicitouſly endeavour to ſecure an intereſt in ſo gracious a benefactor, and to act anſwerably to the terms and

conditions of ſo great ſalvation? Oh! my brethren, let us chearfully comply with all his commands, however dear ſuch a compliance may coſt us; then ſhall we have the conſciouſneſs of our obedience, and the aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, to ſuſtain us in our laſt conflict.

May the conſideration of a future ſtate moderate our ſorrows for the removal of our friends, forbid our mourning as "others that have no hope." When we are attending their remains "unto the "houſe appointed for all living," and, in the words of the Evangeliſt, "are going to the grave to "weep there," let us take care that our ſentiments and ſenſations be ſuch "as become the goſ- "pel of Chriſt." For if our affection be great, and our loſs ſevere, it is too probable that grief will ſuggeſt ideas inconſiſtent with our religious hopes. The ſilence and ſolemnity of the ſcene, and the ſorrows ariſing from a reflection "that we "ſhall ſee the faces of our departed friends no "more," are apt to ſhut out every encouraging thought relative to a happy futurity. But while we are thus indulging deſponding tendencies, and imagining that we are going to conſign the aſhes of our friends to everlaſting darkneſs and oblivion, we are comfortably recovered from our melancholy by the divine aſſurances of a bleſſed immortality. "I am the reſurrection and the life," ſaith the Lord;

Lord; "he that believeth in me, though he were "dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth, and "believeth in me, ſhall never die."

May theſe gracious words ſink deeply into our hearts, and regulate the conduct of our lives! Let them not be reſtricted by us only to funeral ſolemnities, but let them be the daily ſubject of our meditations; be ever about our path and about our bed, ever influence our thoughts and direct our ways; "that ſo, when the hour ſhall arrive, in the "which all that are in their graves ſhall hear the "voice of the Son of God, we, by having abounded "in every good word and work, may come forth "unto the reſurrection of eternal life."

Grant this, Almighty God, for the ſake of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer; to whom, with thee O Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all honour, majeſty, and dominion, now and evermore.

SERMON

SERMON III.

PSALM xix. VERSE 12.

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

IT hath long been received as an inconteſtable truth, that it is the hardeſt thing in the world for a man to acquire a full and exact knowledge of himſelf. It is likewiſe an eſtabliſhed maxim, that ſuch knowledge, ſo far as it is aſcertainable by us, is abſolutely neceſſary both to our comfort in this world, and to our everlaſting happineſs in the next. Whence comes it about, then, that a ſtudy ſo very eſſential to our welfare here and hereafter, is not only ſo little regarded by us, but is the moſt diſagreeable leſſon which can poſſibly be obtruded upon human nature? We confeſs the utility, importance, and ſuperior worth of this branch of ſcience, but nevertheleſs we ſhun all ſuch learning as much as we can; or if we have engaged in it, we fall upon a thouſand beggarly expedients to evade application and diligence.

When we paſſionately love our friends, do we not ſeek opportunities of introducing ourſelves into their company, take pleaſure in their converſation, and quit their ſociety with reluctance?

But

But ſelf is a nearer and dearer intimate than a friend. Whence happens it, then, that man is ſo averſe to a cloſe acquaintance and connection with this beloved object? *That he is* ſo, is evident from his conduct; for otherwiſe how can we account for his daily purſuit of little, mean, and inſipid amuſements; for his reſtleſs deſires of ſhifting the ſcene, and going upon a freſh ſcent after pleaſure? Why doth he plan an unremitting ſucceſſion of entertainments, and hourly conſign himſelf over from one folly to another? Why doth he hurry from country to town, and from the town back again into the country, in queſt of ſomething new? Why are foreign and adventitious delights, change of place, and change of company, the everlaſting ſubjects of his thoughts? Why? but becauſe home is extremely irkſome to him, and his own company the moſt unacceptable of any he can meet with.

The Pſalmiſt aſketh, "Who can underſtand "his errors?" Not that man, moſt aſſuredly, who maintains an indifference to this enquiry, who never inſpects into his own breaſt, nor careth how oft he offendeth.

But it is a point agreed upon by the wiſe, the virtuous, and the religious, that SELF-ACQUAINTANCE is of unſpeakable weight and conſequence to every one of us.

Surely

Surely then it must be worth our while to examine into the causes of our disgust to this important branch of knowledge; and in the next place to investigate those measures which have a direct tendency to make us proficients in this most valuable and extensive field of literature.

1st. Let us endeavour to search out the causes of that usual indifference and dislike, which the general herd of mankind discover to a thorough acquaintance and knowledge of themselves.

I. One grand obstacle to this instructive study is levity of spirit.

This disposition, next to a vicious temper, is one of the most unhappy turns, which the human mind can take. It brings us back again to a state of childhood; and the only observable difference is *an exchange of toys*. A man of this complexion is the dupe of every extravagant fancy which ariseth in his breast. He resembles that mariner who puts to sea without rudder, anchor, or destination of port. No concerted plan to determine his voyage, no instruments to regulate his course, or to withhold him from being driven back by contrary currents.

A light, wanton, and desultory temper is incapable of that attention, steadiness, and perseverance, which are requisite for sober thought and useful

uſeful reflection. Every new vanity arreſts the eye and takes poſſeſſion of the heart; it is not the *worth*, but the *novelty* of the object which recommends it, and no ſooner is the novelty worn off, than the mind ſickens of fruition, and is impatient to go after new purſuits.

But is not this levity of diſpoſition highly derogatory to the dignity of *reaſonable* beings? And, when we conſider that we are candidates for eternity, and haſtening, as faſt as time can carry us, to another ſtate of exiſtence, in what a criminal light doth this temper appear to every ſerious obſerver? Shall a man, who hath buſineſs of everlaſting importance to tranſact, and a very ſhort period allotted him for the negotiating of ſuch *vaſt* concerns, ſuffer himſelf to be drawn aſide by vain amuſements, and to loſe ſight of his grand object? Shall he, whoſe *all* lies at ſtake, and whoſe immortal happineſs depends upon the due improvement of life's narrow ſpan, be negligent of his main intereſt, and abandon himſelf to trifles and puerilities? Will he not, on the other hand, weigh even MOMENTS in the balance, nor part with one of them, but in purchaſe of its *real value?*

II. Indolence is another impediment to the knowledge I am treating of.

Some men are of that ſluggiſh diſpoſition, as to remain

remain immoveable even under conviction. Although they are thoroughly satisfied of the force of a duty, and acknowledge the necessity of practising it, yet they cannot prevail with themselves to set about it. They frame a thousand excuses to avoid a present trouble, and are continually putting off till to-morrow, that which they ought to do to-day; for indolent persons are always dilatory, and repose great confidence in a precarious futurity. Their only objection to the time present is, because it is so; and therefore, while this habit continues, every future opportunity will be as objectionable, when it arrives, as prior opportunities have been.

Such a temper is highly culpable at all times; but the folly thereof is greatly aggravated, when matters of infinite consequence call for immediate dispatch. The man who composes himself to sleep during a storm, when the endangered vessel requires his utmost exertion, or who, during a fire, supinely sits folding his hands, when his safety demands the most expeditious speed, can NEVER be able to lift up his head under that load of reproach with which the world will condemn such egregious sloth. But can *this* be a more blameable character than *his*, who, when affairs of ETERNAL moment claim the greatest attention, diligence, and activity, is insensible of *such* engagements, and regardless of his *future* welfare?

III. A third obſtacle to ſelf-acquaintance is an immoderate thirſt after pleaſure.

This truth will appear very evident, if we conſider, in the firſt place, that pleaſure is always ſure to engroſs the heart of that man who addicts himſelf to it; and, in the ſecond place, that it enervates and diſqualifies the mind for all laborious purſuits. The love of pleaſure is that *commanding* paſſion which uſurps deſpotic power, and ſuffers no power to approach its throne, or *diſpute with it* the empire of the human breaſt. And whoever yields himſelf up to pleaſure, forfeits his liberty, and will find it a moſt difficult taſk to break looſe from his bonds. Miſerable, then, are thoſe captives, to whom enlargement and freedom are almoſt impoſſible acquiſitions! How cautious ought we to be of all ſuch ſurrenders of ourſelves, as preclude us the power of acting a wiſer part for the future! How careful to ſhun ſuch engagements, as are incompatible with thought and reflection, and leave no room for the reſpective offices and duties of life! *Engagements*, which render youth inglorious, and old age contemptible.

But ſuch caution appears additionally neceſſary, when we conſider the pernicious influences and effects of pleaſure on the mind of man—

That

That it not only alienates our affections from God, ſeduces us from our duty, and arrogates the ſole poſſeſſion of our hearts; but, what is a more dangerous evil ſtill, it likewiſe emaſculates the human mind, enervates all the powers of the ſoul, and diſables us from the purſuit of what is great and good.

To a man who prizes liberty and independence, captivity is one of the greateſt calamities which can befal him. But the loſs of freedom, accompanied with loſs of ſtrength—a ſtate of ſervitude, and at the ſame time an impotence of reaſon to extricate him out of his ſlavery—are ſurely the foreſt misfortunes that can happen to humanity: and, more particularly, when we ſubjoin, that pleaſure not only robs us of our ſtrength, but intoxicates the underſtanding, reconciles us to our fetters, and renders us averſe to a diſcharge from our bondage. The knowledge of ourſelves is a laborious ſtudy, and requires conſtant attention and indefatigable induſtry. No wonder, then, that a mind immerſed in pleaſures is reluctant to this arduous taſk. Such averſation is the natural conſequence of voluptuouſneſs and effeminacy. It may, with the ſtricteſt propriety, be ſaid of pleaſure, "that HER poiſon is like the poiſon of "a ſerpent, and that the votaries of Pleaſure are "like

"like the deaf adder, that ſtoppeth her ear; "which refuſeth to hear the voice of the charm-"er, charm he never ſo wiſely."

What hath been ſaid upon the ſubject of pleaſure, will hold good with reſpect to wealth and ambition. The leading paſſion, *whatever it is*, is always imperious and clamorous in its demands, and never can brook a competitor. Talk to him that is greedy of gain, or to the ambitious perſon, about ſelf-acquaintance, urge the dignity of the ſcience, and expatiate upon its extenſive advantages; and you ſhall be ſure to find yourſelf a moſt unwelcome preceptor. Solicit the attentive regards of that man, whoſe heated imagination exhibits ſplendors and titles to his view; attempt converſation with the man of buſineſs, who riſes early, goes to bed late, and eats the bread of carefulneſs, in order to accumulate riches; and what reception will you meet with from either of theſe characters? Like Felix, although converts to the truth of your doctrine, they will diſmiſs you in haſte, and ſay, "Go "thy way for this time, when I have a con-"venient ſeaſon, I will call for thee." And, indeed, if they proceed ſo far, it is the utmoſt you are to expect from them. For, as the promiſe is conditional, and that convenient ſeaſon

will never arrive, ſo the performance of their promiſe will never be fulfilled.

But it is not always levity or lazineſs; it is not only the love of pleaſure, honour, or riches, which keeps men off from an acquaintance with their own hearts. It is ſometimes a ſtrong ſuſpicion, that their breaſts will not bear an inſpection. They have reaſon to fear that things go wrong THERE, and therefore they decline all enquiries; as they who run behind hand in the world do not care to look into their books.

Sad indeed is the caſe of that man, whoſe guilt deters him from all reſearches into his own boſom. But, nevertheleſs, he will do well to conſider, that, however painful ſuch examinations may be, they are abſolutely neceſſary, to prevent further acceſſions of guilt, and by a ſincere repentance to cancel his former ſcore.

Shall he who is ſenſible that he is in a diſeaſed condition, defer the means of cure becauſe medicines are offenſive to the palate, and occaſion a temporary uneaſineſs during their operation? On the other hand, will not delays rivet the diſtemper, and render matters altogether deſperate? Or (to continue the former alluſion) can a man, whoſe fortune is notoriouſly upon the decline, ever retrieve his affairs without examining into

his accounts, and thereby discovering the causes of the decay of his estate. It is true, that such retrospects will be productive of much inquietude, because many articles will reproach him for his indiscretion, folly, and extravagance; but such inspection is his sole expedient, to preclude his ruin, and his present sufferings are his best security against his commission of future errors.

The case is precisely the same with regard to mental arithmetic. The books of the breast are frequently to be looked into, accounts to be faithfully stated, and a man's conduct to be determined accordingly.

But this brings me to the second general head of my discourse; namely, to investigate those measures which have an immediate tendency to make us proficients in the school of *self-knowledge*.

The royal Psalmist hath furnished us with a most excellent rule relative to this grand enquiry—"Commune with your own heart in your "chamber;" or, as the words run in the later translation, "commune with your own heart up-"on your bed." The best place and the most seasonable period for self-converse! The privacy, silence, and solemnity of the scene, all contribute to composure, thought, and seriousness. There the vanities and vexations of this world

are excluded. The labours and ordinary occupations of life ceaſe, and all animoſities, ſtruggles, and competitions are quite ſubſided. In this ſequeſtered retreat, all marks of diſtinction are laid aſide — the high and the low, the prince and the ſubject, are all upon the ſame level; equally under the eye of one common maſter, and equally deſirous of recommending themſelves to his mercy, protection, and favour.

Well, therefore, hath the Pſalmiſt recommended our chambers for ſelf-communion; where the ſoul can retire without interruption, and aſcertain a true knowledge of her ſtate; can balance her accounts, examine her gains and her loſſes, and obſerve what proportion they bear to each other; can diſcover the particulars wherein her conduct hath been faulty, and learn how to rectify ſuch errors for the time to come.

1ſt. In the firſt place, whoever is deſirous of obtaining a large portion of ſelf-knowledge, muſt ſcrutinize into his own heart with great care and diligence.

It is a ſtudy that calls for unwearied application; and he who thinks otherwiſe, will find himſelf in a great error, when he comes to make the experiment. It is extremely difficult to pervade the intimate receſſes of our own boſoms. There are ſo many turnings and windings to obſtruct

ſtruct and confound our ſearch, and ſo much art and diſguiſe practiſed there, to diſcourage and miſlead us in our enquiries, that it demands no ſmall ſhare of reſolution and perſeverance to continue our purſuits of knowledge. The prophet Jeremiah aſſures us, that "the heart is deceitful above all things," and, under the form of an interrogatory, he inſinuates the difficulty of a thorough acquaintance with it, "WHO CAN KNOW IT?" And indeed it is much more deceitful than we are aware of. Although we may cenſure our neighbours ſometimes for their unjuſt dealings and fraudulent behaviour towards us, yet we may nevertheleſs be aſſured, that the greateſt of all cheats are the inmates of our own breaſts. And that, as they are ever preſent with us, and ever ready to beguile us, we cannot be too much upon our guard againſt their treachery and artifice.

I have already obſerved, that it is with great reluctance we enter upon this ſtudy of ourſelves, and that we are too apt to be pleaſed with every trifling avocation which falls in our way. This circumſtance abundantly ſuggeſts to us the great neceſſity of vigilance, attention, and induſtry in our proſecution of this important branch of knowledge. But,

2dly. Again, we muſt likewiſe practiſe the utmoſt SINCERITY, when we ſit in judgment upon ourſelves, ever remembering, that there will be a RE-HEARING in another court, and that we ſhall be called to a ſtrict account, at God's tribunal, for partiality and ſelf-indulgence.

As man is both the judge and the criminal, he will be in great danger (unleſs very much upon his guard) of being biaſſed in his judicial capacity, and paſſing ſuch a favourable ſentence upon himſelf as will be ſet aſide hereafter, and ſubject him to the ſevereſt puniſhment. We muſt not think of pleading ignorance or inability at the bar of God, in juſtification of our partial awards.

As we are appointed judges of our own breaſts, ſo the fault will lie at our doors, if we do not endeavour our very utmoſt to qualify ourſelves for this ſerious and awful province. The Almighty hath given us capacities for this end; and woe to us if we do not improve them to the purpoſes for which they were beſtowed upon us. It is an undoubted truth, that this judiciary office is a very arduous appointment. But the difficulties which accompany it will never be admitted as excuſes for inattention and negligence, and much leſs for partiality and falſehood, in our execution of this great truſt. Whatever lets and

and

and diſcouragements may lie in our way—whatever labour and toil we may undergo, all theſe temporary inconveniences or evils are deſigned to render us more watchful, more active, and more exact in our diſcharge of this ſolemn and momentous duty.

Wherefore, ſince ability, diligence, and impartiality are expected at our hands, let us "keep our "hearts with all diligence," ſetting a guard at every avenue, where vice or folly may gain admiſſion. Many and various are the inlets of ſin and corruption: from our very tempers, inclinations, and paſſions; from conſtitution, education, and cuſtom, a *thouſand* errors may derive their birth, and paſs unnoticed and diſregarded by us, unleſs we maintain a conſtant watch, and narrowly pry into all the dark receſſes of the mind.

3dly. But, in the third and laſt place, there is nothing which ſo effectually contributes to our advancements in ſelf-knowledge as frequent and fervent prayer,

When we withdraw ourſelves from the world, that great theatre of buſineſs and care on the one hand, and of diverſion and diſſipation on the other; when we ſhut the door of our cloſets, call home our ſtraggling thoughts, and conſider ourſelves as in the more immediate preſence of Almighty God, THEN commences ſelf-inſpec-

tion, which discovers our wants and our weakness, our manifold sins and wickedness, and the necessity of repentance and remission. Reiterated and devout prayer was practised by the holy Psalmist, as the means of attaining self-acquaintance. He was very desirous of understanding his errors; but, at the same time, he was abundantly sensible of his insufficiency for so difficult a task. He knew that many of his faults withdrew themselves from his inspection, and eluded his most diligent enquiries; and therefore, he applied to the "Searcher of all hearts," for the discovery of his unsuspected miscarriages, and for the pardon likewise of those absconding crimes; "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

We have a passage much to the same purpose at the conclusion of the 139th Psalm; where the royal supplicant professes his deficiency in self-knowledge; and upon his knees implores, that the Almighty would forgive the imperfection of his scrutinies, and graciously supply the defects of his understanding—"Try me, O God, and seek the "ground of my heart; prove me, and examine "my thoughts.—Look well if there be any way "of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way "everlasting."

It is certain, that if we are SINCERE in the profession of our desires after self-knowledge, we cannot

cannot purſue more effectual methods for *this* end, than repeated and importunate addreſſes to that ſovereign Being, whoſe omniſcience and infinite wiſdom altogether qualify him to give us full and explicit inſtructions upon this ſubject. "He that planted the ear, ſhall not HE HEAR? "he that made the eye, ſhall not HE SEE? "and he that formed the heart, ſhall not HE "KNOW?"

Let us then be frequent and fervent in our applications to the Fountain of light and knowledge, for the aſſiſtances of his grace, and the illuminations of his Divine Spirit; always keeping in mind the encouraging aſſurances of our bleſſed Saviour—"Aſk and it ſhall be given you."

Wherefore, let us conclude with the following prayer:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all deſires known, and from whom no ſecrets are hid; cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Chriſt, our Lord.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

MATTHEW Chap. viii. Ver. 25.

Lord ſave us: we periſh.

THE chapter from which I have taken my text (for your inſtruction and my own) abounds with ſeveral occurrences highly worthy of our conſideration. And, although the words I have now read to you are a detached paſſage from the preceding incidents, yet it will be worth our while to regard this importunate addreſs of the diſciples connectedly with the ſeveral miracles of our Lord, which are mentioned previouſly to their requeſt.

This chapter is uſhered in with our Saviour's cure of a leper, verſes firſt, ſecond, and third—"When he came down from the mountain, great "multitudes followed him. And behold there "came a leper and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, "if *thou wilt*, *thou* canſt make me *clean*. And "Jeſus put forth his hand, and touched him, ſay-"ing, *I will*; be thou clean. And immediately "his leproſy was cleanſed."

Here it is to be noticed, that the *Jewiſh leproſy* was a diſeaſe peculiarly difficult of cure. If you look to the Moſaic account of this diſtemper (in the

14th

14th chapter of Leviticus) you muſt obſerve, that this dreadful calamity was of that virulent and malignant nature, as not only to ſeize upon mankind, and preclude the unhappy ſufferers from all ſociety; but even to infect the garments and furniture, and ſtain the very walls of the houſes.

What then muſt be the power of our bleſſed Lord, who, by the application of his hand, and a ſingle word from his mouth, could reſtore *ſo miſerable* an object to perfect health! I dare ſay we are all tempted to think, that if *we* had been witneſſes to this inſtantaneous cure of ſo loathſome and obſtinate an evil, we ſhould never afterwards have called into queſtion the power of the Meſſiah.

The next miracle which preſents itſelf, is the aſtoniſhing recovery of the centurion's ſervant. Here are ſeveral circumſtances attending this hiſtorical fact, which are not curſorily to be paſſed over.

The account runs thus—"And when Jeſus was "entered into Capernaum, there came unto him "a centurion, beſeeching him; and ſaying, Lord, "my ſervant lies at home ſick of the palſy, griev-"ouſly tormented. And Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will "come and heal him. The centurion anſwered "and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt "come under my roof; but ſpeak the word on-"ly, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. For *I* am a "man

" man under authority, having ſoldiers under me;
" and I ſay to this man go, and he goeth, and to
" another come, and he cometh, and to my ſer-
" vant do this, and he doeth it. When Jeſus
" heard it, he marvelled, and ſaid unto them that
" followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found
" ſo great faith, *no* not in ISRAEL. And I ſay
" unto you, that many ſhall come from the eaſt
" and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, and
" Iſaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.
" But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt
" into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and
" gnaſhing of teeth. And Jeſus ſaid unto the
" centurion, Go thy way; and as thou haſt be-
" lieved, ſo be it done unto thee. And his ſervant
" was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour."

This centurion was a Roman and a Gentile. It is certain that he was a man of a very benevolent diſpoſition, from the encomiums which the Jews paſſed upon him. For in St. Luke's * account of this ſtory, the elders of the Jews are ſaid to interpoſe in the centurion's behalf, and to give additional weight to his petition, by ſaying, that he was worthy of the favour he was ſoliciting at our Lord's hands, becauſe he loved their nation, and had built for them a ſynagogue.

* Luke vii.

It is not altogether improbable, that the centurion was partly a believer in the God of the Jews. For although the Romans had their appropriated deities, yet they ſeldom controverted the deities of other nations, and ſometimes even admitted foreign gods into their own catalogue of divinities. But be this as it will, it is undoubtedly true that the centurion, by the very nature of his requeſt, eſteemed our Lord as poſſeſſed of the power of a God. Perhaps what induced him to entertain ſuch ſentiments of our Saviour, might be a prior acquaintance with the miracle which Jeſus had wrought in Cana of Galilee, when he changed the water into wine at a marriage feaſt; or (what ſtill carries greater probability in it) as the centurion and his ſoldiers were ſtationed at Capernaum, he might have received the moſt authentic intelligence of the extraordinary cure which Jeſus had performed upon the nobleman's ſon in that city; for, ſince true faith can only be founded upon a candid and diligent attention to proper evidence, we muſt ſuppoſe that the centurion had founded his belief and confidence in our Lord upon proofs of ſome miraculous exertions of his divine power. But when we conſider that the recovery of the nobleman's ſon was effected by Jeſus at the great diſtance of Cana from Capernaum, and that the cure was wrought upon the noble-

man's

man's child at a ſingle inſtant of time, it is natural to conclude that the centurion had been apprized of this wonderful fact, and from thence had drawn inferences applicable to his own circumſtances. This hypotheſis is further confirmed by the centurion's manner of reaſoning in his addreſs to Jeſus. " Lord, (ſaid this believing offi-
" cer) I am unworthy that thou ſhouldſt come
" under my roof; but SPEAK THE WORD ONLY,
" and my ſervant ſhall be healed."—' For if *I*, who
' only perſonate a ſubordinate character in the
' army, can procure an exact obedience to my
' commands, by the means of intermediate ſer-
' vants, and without my perſonal appearance to
' enforce my orders; how can I poſſibly doubt
' of the ſovereignty of YOUR WORD, who ſpake
' the nobleman's ſon into health, with the inter-
' vention of the diſtance of Cana from Caper-
' naum?' I ſay, it is very likely that the Centurion had deduced this method of argument from his previous knowledge of the reſtoration of the nobleman's ſon; for otherwiſe it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he would have adopted the expreſſion of the nobleman, " Sir, come down ere my
" ſervant die." Whereas the centurion's requeſt was not couched in words importing the NECESSITY of our Lord's PRESENCE, but carried a far ſtronger and more emphatical confidence in the

the ſufficiency of the power of our Saviour. "Lord, I am unworthy that thou ſhouldſt come "under my roof; but ſpeak the word only, and "my ſervant ſhall be healed." Jeſus moſt graciouſly complied with his petition, and enhanced the favour of the benefit by his commendation of the centurion's truſt and affiance. "When "Jeſus heard it, he marvelled, and ſaid unto them "which followed, verily I ſay unto you, I have "not found ſo great faith, *no not in* ISRAEL!"

The third miracle which follows in the order of this chapter, is the ſudden recovery of the mother of Simon Peter's wife. It is ſaid that ſhe was confined to her bed by a fever; our Lord reached out his all-healing hand, and immediately reinſtated her in her former health. We know very well, that when, through a kind providence, WE are raiſed from a bed of ſickneſs, we are nevertheleſs ſo enervated by the violence of the diſeaſe, that time, tenderneſs, and a further purſuit of medicine, are often neceſſary to conciliate ſtrength and ſpirits to our ſhattered ſyſtems. But when Jeſus removed the matron's fever, he reſtored her at the ſame inſtant to a plenitude of ſtrength; for in the ſame verſe ſhe is repreſented as capable of doing the offices of gratitude and friendſhip to her divine gueſt. "*And ſhe aroſe and miniſtered unto them.*"

I now

I now proceed to the fourth miracle mentioned in this chapter; the incidents of which ſtory were productive of the petition which conſtitutes my text.

" And when he was entered into a ſhip, his " diſciples followed him; and behold there aroſe " a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip " was covered with the waves; but he was aſleep. " And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, " ſaying, Lord! ſave us: we periſh. And he " ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye " of little faith? Then he aroſe, and rebuked the " winds and the ſea, and there was a calm." The conſequence of which miracle was a ſtrange animadverſion of the diſciples upon it. " But the " men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is " this, that even the winds and the ſea obey " him?"

Theſe very men, who expreſs ſo great a degree of ſurprize at our Lord's commands relative to the tempeſtuous deep, had (as it may reaſonably be preſumed) been witneſſes to the ſeveral miracles I have enumerated. They had ſeen the leper cured of his cutaneous deformity; or, in the ſcriptural phraſe, " that his fleſh came again, like unto " the fleſh of a little child, and that he was " clean *." They had been ſatisfactorily ap-

* 2 Kings v. 14.

prized

prized of the miraculous recovery of the centurion's servant; and had been favoured with ocular proofs of the sudden restoration of the mother of one of the disciples wives—Whence proceeded then this consternation and exclamatory expression of wonder at the sovereignty of Jesus over the turbulent elements?

Now it is necessary to observe here, that in all the prior miracles of our Saviour, his disciples were not personally interested, as to their own immediate health and security. And it is likewise worthy of notice, that the miracle which Jesus wrought for their safety was entirely *new*; or, in other words, was such an astonishing display of power as our Lord had never exerted before. They had seen a leprosy altogether removed by the touch of their Divine Master. They had known repeated instances of the cure of fevers effected by his gracious interposition in behalf of the diseased. But to silence, by a single command from his mouth, the raging of the winds, and the fury of the waves, implied such a degree of sovereignty as quite surpassed all former manifestations, and therefore gave a violent concussion to their faith. It is only from the extremity of their danger, and this unprecedented example of our Lord's power, that we can deduce this failure of their confidence in our blessed Saviour. And, however superior they

might be at that period to the reſt of mankind, as touching the main and principal parts of their character; yet in ſome particular inſtances their conduct was very deficient, and ſuch as frequently betrayed the uſual infirmities of human nature.

How often were they reproved by Jeſus for their want of moderation, candour, and charity* ! and HOW VERY OFTEN for their want of † faith ! Perhaps they could hardly have exhibited a ſtronger proof of their defective faith, than upon the preſent occaſion. For their maſter was at that juncture in the ſame ſhip with them, and equally expoſed to the dangers of the tempeſt. Could they poſſibly imagine that he was ſuſceptible of injury from the ſtorm ? or, that if he was able to extricate *himſelf* from the perils thereof, yet that he was incapable of ſufficiently providing for *their* ſafety ?—But it is ſaid, that he lay aſleep upon a pillow in the ſtern of the ſhip ‡. Was the guilt of their diſtruſt alleviated by this circumſtance of their maſter's repoſe ? Could they prevail with themſelves to believe, that the ſlumbers of humanity could ſuppreſs the authority and might of his divine nature ? Nevertheleſs, from St. Mark's words, and from the reprehenſion of their

* Luke ix. 38.—Matth. xv. 23.—xxvi. 52.

† Matth. vi. 30.—xiv. 31.—xvii. 20.

‡ Mark iv. 38.

behaviour

behaviour by our Lord, it may fairly be preſumed, that ſuch derogatory ſentiments had a place in their breaſts. For they did not only awake him out of ſleep (which very action imported timidity and loſs of confidence) but they confirmed this proof of the greatneſs of their fears, and the weakneſs of their faith, by aſking him whether he was regardleſs of their ſafety. As if they had ſaid, 'Maſter, why do you indulge ſleep, when danger 'threatens from every quarter? The impetuoſity 'of the winds and the force of the waves endan-'ger, every moment, a breach in the ſtructure 'of the ſhip; or, if the ſtrength of the veſſel be 'adequate to theſe concurrent difficulties, doth not 'the quantity of water, with which the veſſel is 'filled by the overflowings of the billows, menace 'the more ſpeedy deſtruction of it?' — The Evangeliſt ſubjoins, that hereupon Jeſus ſpake ſilence to the wind and ſtillneſs to the ſea; and immediately theſe tumultuous elements obeyed his divine mandate. As ſoon as the ſtorm was ſubſided, our Lord is repreſented by St. Mark, as reproving his diffident diſciples, with this emphatical interrogatory — "Why are ye ſo fearful? "How is it that ye have NO FAITH*?"

* Mark iv. 40.

Do you enquire whence it came to paſs, that theſe immediate ſcholars of our Lord were no better proficients in the doctrines of their ſacred preceptor? and why ſuch defective characters were honoured with a peculiar commiſſion to explain and propagate the religion of their divine Maſter?—I anſwer, that ſuch reſearches into the decrees of Heaven very ill become the ſons of men; eſpecially when theſe enquiries are puſhed beyond the boundaries limited in the ſcriptures. The moſt eminent prophets of ancient times were not exempted from human failings. Even Moſes and Elias "were men ſubject to like paſſions as we are *." St. Paul's ſolution of this difficulty is this, "that the excellency of the power may "be of God, and not of us." Hence it is, ſays he, "that we have this treaſure in earthen "veſſels †."

But, my friends, there are ſome peculiar qualifications (and moſt amiable qualifications they are) which diſtinguiſhed the diſciples in a pre-eminent degree—I mean their ſpotleſs integrity; their inviolable attachment to the truth at the expence of their own credit; their ſteady regard for their maſter's honour, and for the utility of

* James v. 17. † 2 Cor. iv. 7.

his

his gospel, at the loss of their reputations, their comforts, and their lives.

Alas! my brethren, instead of examining narrowly into the blemishes of *their* characters, and exaggerating the venial defects discoverable therein, we should act a more prudent, useful, and pious part, by scrutinizing into our *own* bosoms; where, believe me, we shall all have the mortification of seeing how shamefully the very best of us fall short even of the most inferior attainments of these disciples of Jesus.

Are *we* severe upon the deficiency of *their faith?* Where is the man amongst us, who can stand forth and say, that his trust and confidence hath never failed, even under trials and temptations far less forcible than those with which the Apostles were exercised?

What innumerable favours have *we* received at the hands of God! what signal deliveries from sickness, dangers, and death have *we* experienced! and how little have all these kind interpositions of Providence availed us, with regard to our future hopes, trust, and dependence upon the wisdom, power, and goodness of our Almighty benefactor!

But to return.—"And behold, there arose a "great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship "was covered with waves. And the disciples

" came to him and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave " us, we periſh."

And, oh! my brethren, cannot *we*, with the greateſt propriety, adopt this importunate prayer? When we reflect upon our innumerable ſins, and conſider the juſt judgment that waits upon ſuch repeated and aggravated offences, ſurely it becomes us all to put up this fervent petition to the throne of grace, " Lord ſave us, or we pe- " riſh." Indeed, to whom can we go, but to JESUS, who hath the words of eternal life? who alone can mediate with the offended Majeſty of Heaven, conciliate the divine favour, and ſecure to us an admiſſion into the regions of everlaſting happineſs.

We are poor, indigent, ſinful creatures; and therefore ſtand in need of one, " who is mighty to " ſave"—who can ſupply all our wants by his fulneſs, and cancel all our iniquities by his merits. The Son of God is alone capable of anſwering all theſe gracious purpoſes to us. The whole creation beſide cannot ſtand us in any ſtead. But the blood of Jeſus cleanſes from all ſin, and reſtores the penitent tranſgreſſor to his forfeited innocence. By this bleſſed atonement the wretched delinquent is entitled to ſue for mercy; and, upon yielding a faithful obedience to the conditions of his redemption, hath the comfortable aſſurance of an irrevocable

vocable pardon. Yes—To whom then ſhall we go but to him, who, by offering up himſelf a ſacrifice for our guilt, hath ranſomed us from the puniſhment due to it, and at the ſame time purchaſed for us a claim to life and immortality?

What ſhall we ſay, then, to thoſe, who either coldly receive or wilfully neglect *ſo great ſalvation?* to thoſe who cavil at the means of grace, and reject the terms of the goſpel, becauſe theſe ſacred conditions do not quadrate with their particular mode of thinking? How many occurrences are there in the natural world, which the wiſeſt of the ſons of men are incapable of explaining! "The wind bloweth where it liſteth *;" but who can ſatisfactorily account for its origin, direction, and termination? This was the reaſoning of infinite Wiſdom; and thrice happy he, who owns the divine authority of this preacher, is abundantly convinced of the weight of his argument, and whoſe inferences and practices are anſwerable to his convictions! Why then ſhould we conteſt ſpiritual truths? Are they not, in their very nature and eſſence, ſuperior to the capacity of the human mind? Alas! how little do we know of that ſpiritual and intellectual part of us, which ſuperintends, commands, and actuates our corpo-

* John iii. 8.

real fabric? Nor is our ignorance limited only to the mental half of us—there are ſeveral difficulties which occur in our bodily ſtructure, and which the moſt accurate anatomiſts could never ſolve to their entire ſatisfaction. The Pſalmiſt ſays, that "we are fearfully and wonderfully "made."

Even the material and coarſer part of our compoſition exhibits ſuch ample diſplays of Divine ſkill, as ſurpaſs all human comprehenſion! If, therefore, we are incompetent judges of earthly things, how can we form adequate conceptions of heavenly things?

The doctrine of the redemption was "to the "Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks "fooliſhneſs." The ſenſual and ambitious views of the former had diſpoſed them to expect a temporal prince, whoſe kingdom was to be of this world; and to reject the true Meſſiah, becauſe he had profeſſed that his dominion was of a far ſublimer nature, than all the kingdoms of this earth, and the glory thereof!

The Greeks, valuing themſelves for ſcience and the ornamental parts of learning, could not be prevailed upon to reliſh ſimple and unadorned truths, eſpecially ſuch truths as were diametrically oppoſite to their political and religious maxims. To men who prided themſelves in the

refinements

refinements of literature, the inveſtigations of philoſophy, and the charms of eloquence, a *crucified* leader and Saviour appeared ſuch a *ſolecism*, as precluded their belief, and provoked their deriſion. Vanity, oſtentation, and arrogance, had blinded the eyes of their underſtanding, and betrayed them into falſe notions of excellency. They were incapable of diſcovering the real greatneſs of humility, diſintereſtedneſs, and univerſal benevolence—all characteriſtics of the goſpel of Jeſus! That extenſiveneſs of the morality which he had inculcated; that purity of heart which he had enjoined; and that ſpirituality of worſhip which he had exacted of his followers, were matters of offence to ſupercilious philoſophers, partial moraliſts, and bigoted idolaters. But did this charge of ambition, pride, and ſenſuality lie only at the doors of the Jews and Greeks?—Alas! no.—We ſhall find, even in the breaſts of thoſe who were more immediately educated in the ſchool of Chriſt, and daily ſet at the feet of their great Maſter, that ſome of theſe unworthy paſſions were but too prevalent. The mother of Zebedee's ſons had imaged to herſelf an opulent and ſplendid monarchy, and therefore had deſired our Lord to inveſt her children with the principal offices of ſtate *.

* Matth. xx. 21, 22.

When

When Jesus had hinted to his disciples, that his sufferings and death were speedily approaching, Peter was instantly alarmed at so mortifying a declaration. He could not repress his lucrative and ambitious prospects; but, in all the temerity of disappointment and despair, he answered, "That "be far from thee, Lord *."

It is likewise observable, that the crucifixion of Jesus had almost extinguished every hope in the bosoms of his disciples and followers; to every one of them were applicable the despondent words of Cleopas—"*But* we *trusted* that it had been "HE which should have REDEEMED *Israel* †."

Indeed it doth not appear, that our Saviour's disciples had entertained clear and explicit sentiments of the nature of our Lord's kingdom till the descent of the Holy Ghost at the feast of Pentecost; which festival our church hath commemorated this day. So far were they from laying aside their secular views, that, after our Lord's death and resurrection, they asked him, "Wilt "thou at this time restore again the kingdom to "Israel?" But after the descent of the Holy Spirit, they corrected their erroneous opinions, and entered into the true genius or nature of Christianity.

* Matth. xvi. 22. † Luke xxiv. 21.

The

The miraculous deſcent now mentioned was a moſt glorious diſplay of Almighty power, frequently referred to in the predictions of our Saviour, and was an event of the utmoſt importance to the Chriſtian diſpenſation. It is ſaid that the Holy Ghoſt came down from heaven "as a mighty "ruſhing wind," thereby to denote the force and energy of his operations. It is alſo obſerved, that the Divine Spirit fell upon the apoſtles, and the reſt of the diſciples, in the form of tongues, cloven or divided into ſeveral parts, thereby ſignifying that miraculous diverſity of languages, with which the whole aſſembly was endowed. But, as you have heard this morning a particular account of this extraordinary truth, recorded by the Evangeliſt St. Luke, in his hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, I ſhall no longer enlarge upon this ſubject.

To conclude.—Let the ſigns and wonders which our bleſſed Saviour wrought to confirm his authority and religion, have their due weight upon our minds. Let us always remember, that our Lord reſted great ſtrength upon this argument. "Believe in me," ſaid Jeſus to his diſciples, "for my very works' ſake." And again, when our Lord was noticing the obſtinate perverſeneſs of the Jews, he made uſe of theſe words—"If I had not done among them the

"works

" works which none other man did, they had not " had ſin." That is, if I had not given them thoſe irrefragable proofs of my divine character, their incredulity and oppoſition had been blameleſs.

The miracles of our Lord were infinitely ſuperior to human wiſdom and human might. He gave inſtantaneous ſight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, ſpeech to the dumb, health to the ſick, and life to the dead. My brethren, what further evidences can we deſire in behalf of our Lord's ſacred miſſion and doctrine? If we now reſiſt thoſe demonſtrations of the height of his power and the excellence of his precepts, what will be our plea for ſuch unbelief at the laſt great day of accounts? Who ſhall dare, at that tremendous period, to ſtand forth and tell the judge of the whole world, that the many miracles which he graciouſly wrought during his abode on earth, were inſufficient for the purpoſes of conviction?

But I truſt that we, my friends, are moſt abundantly ſatisfied with thoſe proofs of our moſt holy religion, and exceedingly thankful for ſuch diſtinguiſhed favours. Wherefore, " let us hold " faſt our profeſſion in Jeſus; nor be of them who " draw back unto perdition, but of them that " believe, unto the ſaving of the ſoul *."—Grant

* Heb. iv. 14.—x. 39.

this,

this, O heavenly Father, for the ſake of thy Son, our Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all honour, &c.

SERMON V.

The Firſt Epiſtle of St. PAUL to the CORINTHIANS,

CHAP. xv. VERSES 53 and 54.

For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality.

So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, "Death is ſwallowed up in "victory."

TO a good man there cannot be a more comfortable and delightful truth than this doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead. The love of life, which is a paſſion implanted in the breaſt of all mankind, naturally leads us to wiſh for an exiſtence beyond the grave. And ſure enough it is, that, even abſtracted from revelation, there are many concurrent circumſtances to juſtify our belief

lief of a life to come in the inviſible world. Long before our bleſſed Saviour made his appearance upon earth, the wiſer part of the Heathen world declared their expectations of ſurviving the grave. Nor were theſe hopes confined to the ſenſible and thinking few of the pagan nations. The expectations of a future ſtate of being prevailed among the common herd of men. And it is well known that at this day there are but few communities of the moſt unenlightened ſavages, who do not believe that they ſhall go to ſome other world, after they are removed out of this. It is true indeed that their notions of an hereafter are very imperfect, and accompanied with many abſurdities. Nevertheleſs, the univerſal or extenſive prevalence of this belief is adjudged to be a ſtrong preſumptive argument in behalf of a future exiſtence.

But of all the natural arguments in favour of this doctrine, there is none which carries ſo great ſtrength in it, as the promiſcuous diſpenſation of God's providence in this world.—The frequent proſperity of the wicked, and the afflicted condition of the pious and good, make it highly probable that there will be a ſtate of life after this, where the former will receive the puniſhment due to their demerits, and the latter the reward of their righteouſneſs. It was an obſervation of the wiſe king of Iſrael, and our own experience confirms this melancholy

lancholy truth, that the beſt of characters are not particularly favoured by Heaven; but that the moſt worthleſs of the ſons of men ſhare, in common with the moſt worthy, the beneficence of the Deity with regard to ſecular comforts.—"All "things, ſays Solomon, come alike to all—there "is one event to the righteous, and to the "wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to "the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him "that ſacrificeth not; as is the good, ſo is the "ſinner; and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth "an oath *."—According to this repreſentation of all ſublunary affairs, what judgment are we to form of the divine œconomy? "Hath the good man "cleanſed his heart in vain; and hath he in vain "waſhed his hands in innocency †?" Surely ſuch integrity cannot go unrewarded! Our natural notions lead us, upon this ſubject, to ſay with Abraham, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do "right ‡?" We cannot poſſibly ſuppoſe that a Being of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, can look with *indifference* upon virtue and vice, upon him that feareth God, and upon him that feareth him not. We ſhould offer violence to our own reaſon, did we attempt to reconcile ſuch indifference with the known attributes of the Deity.

* Eccleſiaſtes ix. 2. † Pſalm lxxiii. 13.
‡ Gen. xviii. 25.

Whence it follows, that ſince the Almighty is infinitely wiſe, infinitely juſt, and infinitely good, there muſt be a future ſtate of Being, in which all ſeeming difficulties ſhall not only be removed, but, by what we may now gather from paſſages in divine revelation, the rectitude of all providential meaſures ſhall be acknowledged, applauded, and adored by men and angels. Or, to uſe the words of St. Paul, there will be a ſtate of exiſtence hereafter, in which "God will render to every man ac-"cording to his deeds—to them who by patient "continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, and "honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto "them that are contentious, and do not obey the "truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation "and wrath; tribulation and anguiſh upon every "ſoul of man that doth evil *."

What hath been ſaid upon this head is perfectly agreeable to reaſon, and to our natural ideas of the divine government. But revealed religion hath ſhed ſo bright a light upon this ſubject, that there only remains one apparent difficulty; which the Apoſtle, in the chapter whence I have taken my text, hath abundantly cleared up.

When we die, our bodies diſſolve into putrefaction, and in length of time become *real* earth.

* Romans ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

This

This truth being allowed, a queſtion is ſuppoſed to reſult, "How are the dead *raiſed up*, and with "what *body* do they come?" But, previouſly to our mentioning of the Apoſtle's anſwer to this enquiry, let us aſk ourſelves whether we apprehend it to be a great difficulty for God to "form "man, and breathe into his noſtrils the breath of "life*?" Can we poſſibly imagine that any thing is difficult to Omnipotence? to Him, who only ſaid, at the creation of the world, "Let there be light, "and there was light;" and which almighty word was ſpoken at a period, when "the earth was "without form, and void, and darkneſs was upon "the face of the deep†?" And if we believe, as indeed we muſt believe, that the creation of man was not a greater effort of ſovereign power than the creation of the world, and of all the firmament above, we cannot ſuppoſe that at the reſurrection-day it will require more exertion of power to call us to life out of our graves, than it did at firſt to form us out of the duſt.——This reaſoning is very obvious, and is the more valuable becauſe it is plain, and level to every capacity. We might be impoſed upon in points that called for curious and nice argumentations, or our underſtandings might be inſufficient to comprehend a long chain of rea-

* Gen. i. 7. † Ibid. i. 3 and 2.

ſons. But there can be no fraud or difficulty in aſſerting or believing that "all things are poſſible "with God."

I proceed now to St. Paul's argument—"But "ſome man will ſay, How are the dead raiſed up, "and with what body do they come? Thou fool! "that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, ex- "cept it die—and that which thou ſoweſt, thou "ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare "grain; it may chance of wheat, or of ſome other "grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath "pleaſed Him, and to every ſeed his own "body."

You will here obſerve, from the appellation given to this ſcornful enquirer, and from the plain and convincing ſolution of his queſtion, that the Apoſtle regarded the objection as weak and triflling. The words may be thus paraphraſed:—"You aſk how a dead body, after it hath rotted in the grave, and all the particles of which it conſiſted are diſſolved, and perhaps ſcattered abroad, ſo as to become parts of other bodies, can poſſibly be made alive again. But do you well conſider who HE is, that undertakes this wonderful work? Are you ſufficiently acquainted with the greatneſs and extent of his almighty power? Or can you prevail upon yourſelf to think "that any thing is "too hard for the Lord?" But if the interroga-

tories,

tories, now tendered, rather ſilence than ſatisfy your doubts, turn your thoughts to the vegetable world. The grain which you ſow, whether it be wheat, barley, or any other grain, all to human appearances die and periſh in the earth. Nevertheleſs, from this ſeeming ſtate of corruption and death, there by and by ſprings from each grain the body which God hath appropriated to it. The grain of wheat produces ſtalks of wheat, and the grain of barley, when committed to the ground, vegetates again, preſerving its ſameneſs through every ſtage of growth, even to its maturity. But can you account for all the meaſures of this wonderful proceſs? If you cannot, then it is abſurdity and folly to argue againſt the reſurrection of the dead, becauſe your limited underſtanding is unable to comprehend the way and method, by which ſuch an event is to be brought about."

And here let me digreſs ſo far as to obſerve, that the objections to ſcriptural truths are founded in ignorance; and that we ſhould never entertain doubts and ſcruples about ſuch things as are poſitively aſſerted in the ſacred writings. Even amidſt the moſt common occurrences, are there not a thouſand difficulties daily preſenting themſelves, which are inexplicable by the very wiſeſt of the ſons of men? Our hearts continue to beat, and

our lungs continue to breathe; but who can account satisfactorily for the unwearied and regular motions either of the one or of the other? We move, or we sit still, just as our inclinations or exigencies require; but who can discover to us the true causes, why our members are subject to our will, either as to exercise or rest? With regard to more external matters, such as the elements about us, was there ever that learned man, who could account for their constituent principles, and the manner of their action? Hear the words of the Son of God upon this subject, in his conversation with Nicodemus—"The wind "bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareſt the "sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it com-"eth, nor whither it goeth *." The causes of the directions and variations of the wind is a piece of knowledge which defeats all our inquiries. But to deny such facts, because we cannot explain them, would justly expose us to derision and contempt. Be it then our endeavours to suppress in us a sceptical disposition and turn of mind for contentious disputations. On the contrary, let us maintain a modest, humble, and quiet temper, resting satisfied with the doctrines of the gospel, without any ambition to be wise "above

* John iii. 8.

"that

" that which is written *." Let us be more attentive to the practical than ſpeculative parts of religion, and then we ſhall conſult the peace of our minds, and advance the improvement of our hearts. And, at the ſame time that we grow good and happy, we ſhall promote the comfort and welfare of others, winning them over to the belief and practice of our moſt holy faith, by the prudence and piety of our behaviour.

St. Paul evidently triumphs in the doctrine of the reſurrection. There is a peculiar ſublimity of ſentiment and language, which runs through the whole of the chapter, and more eſpecially when he quits the argumentative part. For, when this great apoſtle is reaſoning upon this ſubject, his grounds of perſuaſion are as plain as they are forcible, and his diction is ſimple and level to every capacity. But after he hath eſtabliſhed this important truth, you will obſerve, that his thoughts and expreſſions become more grand and lofty. In his further comments upon this glorious principle of Chriſtianity, there is ſuch a ſtrain of joy and exultation attending his diſcourſe, that I believe there are few converſant with it, who are not powerfully ſtruck with the divine oratory of its illuſtrious author. We can-

* 1 Cor. iv. 6.

not reflect upon that grandeur and immortality which await the ſouls of good men in another life, without ſecret tranſports, and fervent wiſhes of becoming their aſſociates in happineſs in a future ſtate. To adopt a ſcripture interrogatory, "Do not our hearts burn within us *," while we read the following verſes of St. Paul? "It is "ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption; "it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; "it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power; "it is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual "body: there is a natural body, and there is a "ſpiritual body. And ſo it is written, The firſt "man Adam was made a living ſoul; the laſt "Adam was made a quickening ſpirit. Howbeit "that was not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that "which is natural, and afterward that which is "ſpiritual. The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; "the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven. As is "the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy; "and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that "are heavenly: and as we have borne the image "of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of "the heavenly! Now this I ſay, brethren, that "fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of "God; neither does corruption inherit incorrup-"tion." Here, then, appears a difficulty: for if

* Luke xxiv. 32.

fleſh

flesh and blood are incompatible with the kingdom of God, and corruption has neither any connection with, nor claim to incorruption, what will become of all those who shall have died prior to the resurrection, and of those who, at that awful period, shall be found alive; or, in other words, of those who shall then be possessed of mortal and corruptible bodies?

The Apostle gives us the solution of this question, by an affirmation, under the force and sanction of divine inspiration. He tells us, that there will be many living at the great day of the resurrection; but that, however surprizing it may appear, yet the process of that grand solemnity will remove every difficulty, and confirm the truth of his sacred doctrine. Be pleased to observe attentively, what he further advances upon this most interesting subject:—"Behold, I shew "you a mystery—we shall not all sleep, but we "shall all be changed; in a moment, in the "twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for "the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall "be raised incorruptible, and we shall be chang-"ed." The short parenthesis in this verse is descriptive of a very *remarkable circumstance* attending the grandeur of this stupendous scene. St. Paul assures us, that the wonderful operation effected upon the bodies of those who are found

alive at the reſurrection ſhall take place, *when the laſt trumpet ſhall ſound*, to awaken all the millions of ſaints who are ſleeping in the duſt. "For the "trumpet ſhall then ſound"—the voice of the archangel, and attending celeſtial legions, ſhall fill the whole earth and heaven, and the dead ſhall immediately hear and obey the divine ſummons. The bodies of good men ſhall then be raiſed incorruptible, and thoſe pious characters who ſhall be living at the laſt day, ſhall have their bodies changed, like the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken into heaven without the previous introduction of dying. The Apoſtle thus goes on: "—For this corruption muſt put on incorrup- "tion, and this mortal muſt put on immorta- "lity—So when this corruptible ſhall have put "on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have "put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to "paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwal- "lowed up in victory." Whereupon the Apoſtle triumphantly breaks forth into the following inquiries:—"O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! "where is thy victory?"

From the account now given of the riſing of the dead, I ſhall draw two inferences.

Iſt. The neceſſity of a religious life, in order to partake of a happy reſurrection.

IIdly.

IIdly. The support and comfort which this doctrine affords to the mind of man, under the heaviest disappointments and most painful sufferings.

Ist. The necessity of a religious life, in order to partake of a happy resurrection.

Though it is very true that ALL the dead shall rise from their graves at the last day, or, to use the sacred and emphatical words of our blessed Saviour: "The hour is coming, in the which "ALL that are in their graves shall hear his voice, "and shall come forth; they that have done good, "unto the resurrection of life, and they that "have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*;" yet it is obvious, upon a careful perusal of St. Paul's address here to the church of Corinth, that the Apostle is not speaking of the resurrection in *general*, but of the resurrection *of pious men*; or, to speak his own phrase, "of "those who are Christ's at his coming." Whence it follows, that the good only are entitled to the distinguished honours enumerated in this chapter by St. Paul. So that if we live debauched and wicked lives, we can have no grounds to entertain hopes of a joyful resurrection. This is

* John v. 28, 29.

a truth

a truth worthy of our utmoſt attention; becauſe we frequently ſee multitudes, in a dying hour, flattering themſelves with expectations of a happy reſurrection, without having taken thoſe previous meaſures, which the goſpel hath enjoined, to prepare and fit us for this glorious change. Alas! the man who hath lived viciouſly, cannot die virtuouſly; and therefore cannot be happy after death. It is true, that when he finds himſelf departing out of this world, and is conſcious that all his endeavours to obtain a longer abode here are weak and ineffectual, he indulgeth wiſhes of riſing from his duſt to immortality and happineſs. But thoſe vicious diſpoſitions of his mind, which he carries with him out of this world, he will aſſuredly retain in the next. "He that is unjuſt, "will be unjuſt ſtill, and he that is filthy, will be "filthy ſtill *." And ſuch unrighteouſneſs and impurity muſt, in their own nature, diſqualify him for that glory and permanent ſplendor, which ſhall be the portion of thoſe who, in this world, ſhall have ſubdued every inordinate luſt and affection, and ſhall have "purified themſelves even "as God is pure †."

Whoever ſhall be deſirous of ſharing in the joys of a bleſſed reſurrection, muſt exert his ut-

* Revelation xxii. 11. † 1 John iii. 3.

moſt

moſt diligence to act anſwerably to his Chriſtian profeſſion. "He muſt do juſtice, love mercy, "and walk humbly before God*." He muſt "deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and" muſt "live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this "preſent world†." He muſt "add to his faith "virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to know-"ledge temperance, and to temperance patience, "and to patience godlineſs, and to godlineſs bro-"therly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs cha-"rity‡." In all theſe virtues and graces he muſt abound, if he now wiſhes to bear, at the laſt day, the image of the heavenly Adam (as St. Paul expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject); that is, to reſemble Jeſus Chriſt in purity, glory, and immortality. The conſequence of which high and diſtinguiſhed honour ſhall be, a happy "entrance admi-"niſtered unto him into the everlaſting kingdom "of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt§."—— We muſt likewiſe ſtrive, in this life, to excel in holineſs, that we may excel in glory in the next. The Apoſtle informs us, that the degrees of ſplendor and happineſs of the pious dead, will be proportionate, at the reſurrection, to their ſeveral and reſpective advancements in Chriſtian

* Micah vi. 8. † Titus ii. 12. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. § Ibid. i. 11.

perfection.

perfection. Attend to his own own words—"There is one glory of the ſun, and another "glory of the moon, and another glory of the "ſtars; for one ſtar differeth from another ſtar "in glory—ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the "dead." And ſurely it is a moſt laudable ambition to endeavour at excelling in goodneſs, ſince ſuch pre-eminence will promote us to a higher rank of glory and felicity. We muſt likewiſe maintain a ſteadineſs and uniformity in our practice of all religious duties. No temptations are to ſeduce us; no difficulties are to diſcourage us. We muſt be ſuperior to all the blandiſhments of ſinful pleaſures, however artfully and importunately they may addreſs themſelves to our various luſts and paſſions. We muſt alſo "endure hard-"neſs, as ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, and fight the "good fight of faith *"—not only reſiſt whatever would allure us from the diſcharge of our duty, but perſevere in our warfare, obey "the cap-"tain of our ſalvation," and reſolutely continue "faithful unto death;" more eſpecially ſince we are aſſured, by divine declaration, that ſuch inviolable fidelity ſhall be rewarded "with a crown "of life †."

* 2 Tim. ii. 3.—1 Tim. vi. 12.
† Rev. ii. 10.

And

And indeed, all that I have now ſaid is perfectly conſonant to the inference which St. Paul himſelf deduces from this doctrine of the reſurrection. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren," ſays the Apoſtle, "be ye ſteadfaſt, unmoveable, "always abounding in the work of the Lord; for- "aſmuch as ye know that your labour ſhall not "be in vain in the Lord."

IIdly. I am to take notice of the ſupport and comfort which this great principle of our Chriſtian faith affords to the mind of man, under the heavieſt diſappointments and moſt painful ſufferings.

It would be a very needleſs undertaking to prove, "that man is born to ſorrow, as the ſparks "fly upwards*." Every day bears its teſtimony to this melancholy truth; and ſooner or later will make every man a convert to it. The nature of this world and all its occurrences, the conſtitution of the human mind, and the frame of our bodies, ſubject us to various and innumerable afflictions. Our hopes often terminate in diſappointment; or, if they meet with gratification, the objects ſeldom anſwer to our wiſhes, and hardly ever fail to loſe their reliſh during a length of poſſeſſion. Our fears are often vain, and always productive of bitter inquietude. They fre-

* Job v. 7.

quently

quently import diſtant evils by anticipation—evils which never may arrive—They multiply likewiſe and enlarge future ills, beyond their juſt number and real magnitude. And indeed, with regard to what are uſually ſtyled pleaſures, they are generally purchaſed with difficulty, or accompanied with ſome uneaſineſs, or end in remorſe and vexation of ſpirit.

But let us attend the couches of the ſick, and what mortifying leſſons may we learn from thoſe, who, in the ſeverity of their ſufferings, appropriate to themſelves the language of Job! "I am "made to poſſeſs months of vanity, and wea- "riſome nights are appointed to me. When I "lie down, I ſay, When ſhall I ariſe, and the night "be gone? and I am full of toſſings to and fro un- "to the dawning of the day *." Theſe are very pitiable ſcenes of diſtreſs — diſtreſs! which one day or other may become the portion of every one of us.—Shall we take a view of the moſt piercing of all afflictions? then let us enter the houſes of mourning, where death hath made irreparable breaches into family connections and comforts, where we ſhall hear the cries of parents bereaved of their children, or of children bewailing their departed parents. Now, is there

* Job vii. 3, 4.

any

any doctrine, or if there be, what is that doctrine, which can ſuſtain the human mind amidſt all the manifold difficulties, diſappointments, and preſſures of human life? What is that doctrine, which can inſpire fortitude, patience, and reſignation under ſickneſs, pain, and diſſolution? Whence are we to fetch thoſe principles that can ſupport us under the agonizing ſolemnity of parting with our expiring relatives and friends?—Yes: the glorious diſcovery of a reſurrection to everlaſting life and happineſs. I ſay, that this bleſſed doctrine, duly believed, ever uppermoſt in our thoughts, and actuating all our behaviour, will lead us to regard the funeral removal of all that are near and dear to us, as only a temporary ſeparation which *never* NEVER ſhall prevail any more, becauſe " death ſhall then be ſwallowed up " in victory."

Hear the triumphant language of a moſt excellent prelate, long deceaſed *.

' O tranſporting period! when God ſhall ' graciouſly wipe away all tears from our eyes, ' and ſin and ſorrow ſhall be no more! when this " corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this " mortal ſhall put on immortality," and we ſhall ' enter upon the poſſeſſion of all that glory and

* Archbiſhop Tillotſon.

' felicity,

'felicity, which God hath promiſed, and our faith 'hath believed, and our hopes have raiſed us to 'the expectations of! When we ſhall be eaſed 'of all our pains, and reſolved of all our doubts, 'and be purged from all our ſins, and be freed 'from all our fears, and be happy beyond all our 'hopes; and have this happineſs ſecured to us be-'yond the power of time and change! When 'we ſhall know God and other things without 'ſtudy, and love him and one another without 'meaſure, and ſerve and praiſe him without wea-'rineſs, and obey his will without the leaſt 'reluctance; and ſhall ſtill be more and more 'delighted in the knowing, and loving, and 'praiſing, and obeying of God to all eter-'nity!'

But, as I have before noticed, this exquiſite happineſs is reſerved for thoſe only who lead virtuous and holy lives; "for without holineſs no "man can ſee the Lord*." It is therefore highly neceſſary, that this conſideration ſhould ſink deep into our breaſt, and influence every part of our conduct. If this doctrine be conſcientiouſly obſerved by us, we may reaſonably hope to die comfortably, and after death to riſe glorioufly.

* Heb. xii. 14.

Which that we may all do, God of his infinite mercy grant, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed everlaſting praiſe.

HEALTH, AN ALLEGORY:

In a LETTER *to a* LADY.

MADAM,

I Received your obliging favour; and wiſh the goddeſs, whom you mention with rapture, may be your conſtant friend and companion. Methinks I am not at all ſurpriſed, that Pagans and Poets have deified Health.

I think too they have judged mighty well in repreſenting this imaginary deity as a female, to expreſs thereby the ſuperior charms of this divinity. Had I a talent for fable, I would ſketch out for you an allegory upon this ſubject. I ſhould probably begin my ſtory after the following manner, or ſomething like it.

Health is reported to be the daughter of Temperance, and born in the golden age. Some are of opinion that ſhe was deſcended, on the male ſide, from Exerciſe. But, by the beſt lights I could ever obtain in a matter of ſuch antiquity and obſcurity, I am inclined to think that this account of her genealogy is ſpurious. For Temperance was not ſo properly her mother, as nurſe or guardian, one who had the tuition of her infancy, and was afterwards advanced to a moſt important poſt, as ſhall hereafter be mentioned.

Whatever darkneſs, however, may attend her parental deſcent, yet all the annals agree in the following; that her birth was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony; for the Graces viſited her in perſon, and each would have adopted her for their own. This beautiful young virgin, though highly accompliſhed, was never fond of public appearances; which you muſt own, Madam, would be ſtrange ſelf-denial in the pretty goddeſſes of our days. Her principal delight was in the fields and woods, where Flora dreſt her with the roſe and the lily; and Diana frequently made her a companion in her ſports. A nymph, thus poſſeſſed of more than human accompliſhments, was juſtly entitled to a throne; nor was it long before ſhe was inveſted with the ſceptre by the concurring voices and acclamations of the people. Her reign was long and proſperous, and her ſubjects were happy. Nor, indeed, could leſs be expected from a queen, that founded her government upon the unerring laws of nature, which were as obligatory upon herſelf as upon her people; nor could the royal authority itſelf diſpenſe, at any time whatever, with a breach of thoſe primary ſtatutes.

Her firſt miniſter was Virtue, who had an unbounded aſcendence over her miſtreſs. Beſides this premier favourite, there was another, who

was almoſt a conſtant aſſociate of the queen. The name of this pretty ſylvan was Chearfulneſs. She was generally apparelled in green, of a mild and compoſed aſpect, liable to have her features ſometimes brightened by a ſmile. Many other virgins joined the train of this princeſs, and were adjudged to be of Britiſh extraction. There was Innocence, dreſt in white, with a curious bluſh of crimſon on her cheeks; ſhe was handed along by Prudence, who wore a good deal of ſolicitude in her countenance, and ſeemed to ſtep with great caution. She was, indeed, an armed ſatellite; and had more of ſeverity than ſweetneſs in her brow. But there was a moſt beautiful form, that juſtly challenged a particular deſcription; a lady, who ſo cloſely adhered to the white-robed fair, that it is ſaid, they were never ſeen apart. This virgin's name was Peace. She had a moſt lovely ſerenity in her viſage, and a ſoftneſs not to be delineated by a human pen. The aſſiſtance of the imagination muſt here be called in, and the portrait wear an angel's face. Though ſhe was highly admired by the gazing crowd, yet ſhe ſeemed to borrow none of her happineſs from the applauſes and adoration of the multitude. It is further given out, that, fond as this lady was of the court of Health, ſhe rarely makes her appearance in the courts and palaces of other monarchs; and

and the reaſon aſſigned is her inſeparable attachment to the female above-mentioned, who was arrayed in a garment of ſpotleſs white.

In proceſs of time, there aroſe a powerful enemy to the queen—Luxury, an abſolute monarch, who proclaimed war againſt Health. The armies of the former were principally Aſiatics, and more numerous than thoſe of Xerxes, which drank up whole rivers as they marched, or than thoſe of the Macedonian madman, who conquered all but himſelf. Yet, notwithſtanding the number of the tyrant's forces, Health had never been ſubdued, if her ſubjects had not liſtened to overtures of peace from the enemy; which, as you ſhall hear by and by, paved the way for the diſſolution of the queen's happy government.

Exceſs led the armies of Luxury into the field, and commanded the van; Sickneſs and Pain were poſted in the centre; Povery and Pride had the command of the wings; and Repentance and Death brought up the rear.

Health headed her own troops, and was ſupported by her two illuſtrious amazons, Reſolution and Prudence. The latter drew up the forces with ſuch matchleſs ſkill, that their corps were impenetrable by the enemy. Their helmets and coats of mail were tempered with ſo much art, that they were proof to the enemy's ſhot. Nor was

the queen's army to be ſurpriſed at any time by a ſudden invaſion. For Prudence had erected up and down ſeveral watch towers, whence the motions of the adverſe party were eaſily deſcried.

The diſpute was long and doubtful; till at laſt, the enemy finding no ſucceſs likely to enſue from open meaſures of hoſtility, had recourſe to ſtratagem. For, ſending Pleaſure as an ambaſſadreſs, to mediate between the two contending powers, this artful ſyren ſo inſinuated herſelf into the favour of the queen's ſubjects, and ſowed ſuch diſcontent in their breaſt, that, being gradually won upon by her blandiſhments and corruptions, they at firſt began to murmur againſt the ſeverity of the queen's diſcipline, and, by degrees relaxing of their allegiance, they at laſt revolted openly to the enemy.

Health being thus overpowered by her adverſary, or rather deſerted baſely through the treachery of her own ſubjects, withdrew from earth to heaven, and was ſpeedily enrolled among the divinities; whence ſhe ſtill continues to impart her benefits to thoſe diſtinguiſhed few, who wiſely regulate their lives by her golden precepts, and hold no correſpondence with Luxury, or her partiſans.

And

And now, Madam, as I am a profeſt prieſt of the goddeſs, you may depend upon my beſt intereſt with her to ſhower down upon you a double portion of her favours. For I am,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

On HUSBANDRY.

Omnes homines, qui ſeſe ſtudent præſtare cæteris animalibus, ſumma ope niti decet, ne vitam ſilentio tranſeant, veluti pecora, quæ natura prona atque ventri obedientia finxit. SALL.

THIS world hath often been compared to a wide theatre, where every man hath a part allotted him to act; and it highly becomes every man to acquit himſelf properly in that character which he perſonates; that when he retires from the ſtage, there may be conferred upon him the deſirable encomiums of a diligent actor, a faithful friend, and a generous patriot. What excuſe then can be made for that portion of mankind who paſs their days in a culpable indolence or in a criminal activity; whoſe knowledge is circumſcribed to a juſt taſte in claret, and actions extend little further than to the drinking of it! men, whoſe ambition riſes no higher than to a pre-eminence in their horſes and hounds; and who experience only thoſe ſenſual delights, which their dogs perhaps enjoy in a degree ſuperior to themſelves? There are, indeed, ſeveral ſmall trivial qualifications, which, when joined with greater, may occaſionally render the poſſeſſor the more agreeable; but which, if

once

once drawn out, and expoſed to light by themſelves, are incapable of exciting the leaſt eſteem; like particular ſhades in a picture, which, while they are connected with the main deſign, may be laudable decorations, but if once abſtracted, appear inferior to the paintings of a ſign-poſt.

What is a greater argument of a mean and ignoble ſpirit, than to dance life away in a perpetuated aſſembly, or to play away threeſcore years and ten at repeated games at cards? When perſons of this character make their exit, they are as little regarded, after the curtain is dropped, as thoſe dramatis perſonæ which are hired to fill up the retinue of the hero.

There are a vaſt number and variety in the provinces of life, inſomuch that there is no excuſe left for an ungenerous indolence. Though all men are not alike capable of acting in an exalted ſphere, of perſonating the general or the ſtateſman, yet every man is capacitated to act ſome part or another well. Gentlemen of eſtates can never be at a loſs to employ their time; becauſe to ſuch a large field lies open, where they may expatiate with the greateſt ſatisfaction to themſelves, and uſefulneſs to others. There are unnumbered pleaſures, which a mere eſtate itſelf entitles a man to; and he who will be ſo juſt to himſelf, and good to others, as to lay hold on the happy opportunities

portunities that money offers, hath this peculiar privilege, that at the ſame time he is promoting the benefit of others, he is procuring to himſelf, by ſuch acts of benevolence, the greateſt happineſs attainable in life.

And here I ſhall addreſs myſelf to a particular advantage, which gentlemen, whoſe eſtates lie in land, may enjoy, I mean that of culture and improvement, which at once dilates and inſtructs the mind, makes conſtant acceſſions to the eſtate, confirms and invigorates the health, and is of diffuſive ſervice to the poorer part of the nation. To a man of a philoſophical turn here are continually new ſcenes preſenting themſelves to the imagination, freſh wonders opening to curioſity, and a continued ſtream of pleaſure ever pouring in upon the ſoul. The earth ſeems, as it were, in ſilent gratitude, amply to repay the induſtry beſtowed upon her; while nature puts on all her gaudy dreſſes, and appears with a variety of beauties, at once to pleaſe and inform the mind, and at the ſame time to charm and gratify the ſenſes. This employment, under proper regulations, is a theme worthy of a refined taſte, and ſuited to a ſublime genius; whence accordingly we find, that the greateſt and the wiſeſt men were frequently withdrawing themſelves from affairs of ſtate, to retire into the country, where we may obſerve them, in

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the moſt luxuriant ſtyle and paſſionate expreſſions, enlarging upon the rich profuſion and ſatisfactory pleaſures of the ſame.

The vegetable kingdom may be ſaid to be in one continual bloom to a contemplative mind; and every gradual change, which nature introduces, exhibits a new ſubject for the employ of his thoughts. How delightful is it to ſurvey the different growths, ſtages, and progreſſive ſucceſſions of plants, trees, and fruits, from their firſt ſwelling and expanding into life, to their ſhooting into a ſlender youth, and thence terminating in a beautiful maturity!

What led me into the above train of thought, was a viſit I lately paid to a friend of mine in the country; with whoſe character I ſhall beg leave to cloſe this ſpeculation.

Cornelius is a man of fifteen hundred pounds per annum. When he came to his eſtate, the net income thereof ſcarcely exceeded half its preſent value; but by a frugal and prudent conduct, he hath paid a large debt, with which his land had been encumbered during many years. He was always of a thoughtful and ſtudious diſpoſition; and, as men of this character are generally enemies to pomp and noiſe, ſo Cornelius was ever averſe to public employments. He had arrived to ſuch a knowledge of mankind, at an age when

when men commonly but begin this ſtudy, as to know, that it required a greater degree of firmneſs and reſolution to maintain an integrity amidſt public corruption, than what his tender unexperienced youth could pretend to; the temptations in ſuch departments being no leſs perſuaſive than they are numerous. The ſuſpected hypocriſy of ſome, the apparent diſhoneſty of others, and the great folly of moſt, were to him powerful inducements to retirement; ſo far as ſuch receſs is agreeable to thoſe unalterable ties and obligations which a man lies under, of being ſerviceable to his country. Yet this his retreat proceeded by no means from a ridiculous affectation, a ſordid deſire of eaſe, and a culpable diſguſt to buſineſs; but from a ſerious reflection upon the difficulties of filling public ſtations with honour; the unkind conſtructions which men are apt to put upon the beſt intentions; and the univerſal ingratitude which the moſt laudable meaſures are ſure to meet with, if unattended with ſucceſs. Ingratitude! that vice by which the moſt delicate minds are the moſt eaſily affected, as the tendereſt conſtitutions are the ſooneſt indiſpoſed by the inclemency of the weather.

A ſhallow inſight into mankind may generate pride, and a ſupercilious behaviour; but a profound philoſopher hath too much knowledge to

be vain, envious, and ill-natured. The conſequences of an unbounded underſtanding, are humanity, generoſity, and love. Thus the auſterity of Cornelius's virtue is ſo ſmoothed by the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition, improved by his knowledge, that his converſation is never leſs obliging than inſtructive; and ſo judiciouſly are good ſenſe and a genteel behaviour interwoven together, that it is difficult to determine, in this happy compoſition, which is moſt predominant, the acute philoſopher, or the fine gentleman.

With theſe qualifications my friend is retired into the country. The method of paſſing his time is amidſt his books in the morning; and in the afternoon his hours are devoted to friendſhip, or the ſurveying of his eſtate. It is highly pleaſing to obſerve with what a mixture of affection and reſpect the tenants ſalute their landlord, the moſt inferior of them appearing rather a ſpecies of friends than dependants. He hath ſo juſtly calculated the product of the farms they occupy, as to allow the huſbandmen ample ſupplies for the maintenance of their families; and the tenants are ſo thoroughly acquainted with the greatneſs of their maſter's ſoul, as to know, that the improvements, which they make upon his eſtates, will never prove a temptation to him to raiſe their rents, without allowing them

proper

proper rewards for their induſtry. By theſe means, there is not a ſpot of ground uncultivated. The generoſity of Cornelius's mind ſhines forth in the plenty of his tenants, and the wiſdom of his conduct is conſpicuous in the carriage of his ſervants; for, as hath already been intimated, he hath ſo prudently blended love and reſpect in the minds of his tenants, that the latter reſtrains the former from all excurſions into an indecent and nauſeous familiarity.

Before I conclude this paper, I muſt beg the reader's attention to the relating of a fact, which I was informed of by the farmer immediately concerned. A few days ago, this honeſt huſbandman was waiting upon my friend, to diſcharge a part of his year's rent. Upon the entrance of Ruricolus into the room, Cornelius obſerved a ſettled melancholy in his countenance; and, ſuſpecting the cauſe thereof, prevented the farmer's complaints, by aſking him, whether he had made the ſame gain this year of his acres as formerly? To which the countryman replied, that the violence of the winds laſt autumn, and the ſudden ſtorms of ſnow towards the concluſion of the winter, had ſcattered ſuch large quantities of his corn, and deſtroyed ſuch a number of his ſheep, that, were it not for a little money which he had laid up, he could not have ſupported the ſeverity of the ſhock. Cornelius

lius knowing the truth of the ſtory, and the diligence of the huſbandman, generouſly remitted him half his year's rent.

By theſe meaſures Cornelius enjoys thoſe exſtatic pleaſures which none but minds exaltedly virtuous are capable of reliſhing. He hath a ſecret lodged within him for ſerenity and peace againſt all inclemency of weather and intemperature of the ſeaſons. The rude blaſts of the eaſt wind teem with as many bleſſings as the moſt fertile zephyrs; inaſmuch as the former enable him to taſte the fruits of the latter in their trueſt perfection, by furniſhing him with opportunities of relieving unfortunate induſtry and diſtreſt virtue; by placing it in his power to anſwer the neceſſitous petition of the forlorn widow, and the moving cries of the hungry orphan!

Go on, great man!—The heavens ſhall ever ſmile on the largeneſs of thy ſoul, and ſhed their moſt friendly influences upon thee, thy family, thy lands, thy cattle! Thus ſhall thy days never know interruption of happineſs, and thy end ſhall be crowned with the applauſe of thy Maker.

ON ZEAL.

Subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ manſere comæ, ſed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument. VIRG.

THERE never was a word more miſtaken than Zeal. To this idol have been ſacrificed thouſands and ten thouſands. It delights and ſports itſelf in human victims, like Moloch. As an angel of darkneſs, it deals murders, plagues, and famine around; and with the venomous malignity of a baſiliſk, kills whatever it looks upon.

This monſter hath turned the moſt fertile plains into barren wilderneſſes, depopulated large and mighty cities, and totally effaced the image of the Creator through ſeveral parts of the eaſtern world. Zeal, abſtracted from charity, is the wild enthuſiaſm of a diſtempered brain, or the infernal rage of an abandoned hypocrite.

While I was ruminating on this ſubject, I fell aſleep, and to the above reflections I attribute the following viſion:—

Methought I was on a ſudden tranſported into a diſtant country, the air of which was very thick and heavy, ſo that the whole region appeared to be involved in a large cloud. I had not been

there

there long, before a beautiful being met me, and accoſted me with the queſtion, "How I came thither?" My reply hath eſcaped my memory. But my fair guide, without further interrogations, led me towards a large ſtructure, which, ſhe informed me, was the temple of Zeal.

As we paſſed along, we took notice of vaſt armies, which encompaſſed us on all ſides. The colour of their cloaths was the deepeſt ſcarlet that I had ever beheld. Their ſwords, which were always drawn, were reeking with the blood of thoſe whom they had encountered.

Thus we advanced towards the middle of the country. As we drew nearer to the temple, the air grew ſo thick, and the whole atmoſphere was ſo dark, that the building ſeemed entirely ſituated in the very ſhades of night. The building was illuminated with a ſmall taper, which caſt an additional gloom and horror around the place. Inſtead of foliages, and other decorations, uſual at the entrance of large edifices, there were carved the figures of human ſkulls, and other bones; ſo that the external ornaments reſembled the appearances of a ſepulchre. At the further end of the temple, we deſcried the female to whom it belonged. She was ſeated upon a throne of ebony, and arrayed in deep mourning. Her face was very pale, and much emaciated, occaſioned by

long vigils, and unremitted induſtry in her attention to her engagements. Her eyes and hands were lifted upwards, and ſhe ſeemed to be actuated by the moſt fervent devotion. On her right hand ſtood Superſtition, dreſt in the habit of a nun, and was her prime miniſter of ſtate, from whom ſhe received all her intelligence. On her left appeared a hideous phantom, called Death; in one hand was lightning, and in the other a ſcythe.

After having taken a ſufficient ſurvey of this ſcene of terrors, I deſired my leader to conduct me back, with which requeſt ſhe immediately complied; and entertained me, as we paſſed along, with ſuitable reflections upon what I had ſeen. I was very deſirous to know the lady by whom I had been ſo highly obliged, when a fortunate incident occurred, which introduced me into the whole ſecret.

There advanced towards us a tribe of nymphs, whoſe charms were too many and too great for the deſcription of the pen; each held in her hand a golden harp. Their eyes were ſtrong and ſparkling, and at the ſame time tempered with a peculiar ſoftneſs. Their hair flowed upon their ſhoulders in graceful ringlets; and when they ſpoke, muſic iſſued from their tongues. No ſooner had their preſident, who was the goddeſs Harmony, attended by the liberal arts and ſciences, paid her reſpects

reſpects to my conductor, than ſhe immediately threw off her diſguiſe; when, lo! all on a ſudden, the miſts and clouds were diſpelled; the day broke in upon us, and the ſun ſhone in its meridian glory. Whereupon I turned myſelf, to notice what was become of the ſcene, which I had ſo lately beheld; when, to my great ſurpriſe and pleaſure, the ſpot where the temple ſtood was converted into a verdant hill, covered with flocks of ſheep, whoſe fleeces emulated the whiteneſs of ſnow; while the plains below were beautifully divided into regular incloſures, and ſtocked with vaſt herds of cattle. Inſtead of the cries of the miſerable, our ears were entertained with the bleatings of ſheep, the lowings of oxen, the ſweet murmurs of rivulets, and the melodious warblings of nightingales! I was then turning towards my guide, who inſtantly vaniſhed from my ſight; but by the appellation which the nymphs gave her, I learnt that ſhe was the goddeſs Liberty, the Genius of Great Britain!

DETRACTION,

A VISION.

Viſceribus miſerorum et ſanguine veſcitur atro.
VIRG.

SUPERIOR excellence is the general mark for calumny; and envy is uſually led to aſperſe what it cannot imitate. A little mind is ſcandalized at the pre-eminence of its neighbour, and endeavours to depreciate the virtues which it cannot attain to. Thus the diſtempered eye is impatient of prevailing brightneſs; and, by attempting to obſerve the lucid object, inadvertently betrays its own weakneſs. Pride is the fruitful parent of detraction; and it is the unjuſt eſtimate which men ſet upon themſelves, that generates in their minds this ridiculous contempt of greater worth. Perſons of this unhappy complexion regard all praiſes conferred upon another as derogatory from their own value. The arrows of the backbiter are generally ſhot in the night; and the moſt unſpotted innocence is the game of this infernal deſtroyer. The heads of his darts are imbrued in poiſon; and it too frequently happens, that a ſmall wound proves mortal to the injured. But to drop for the preſent theſe figurative expreſſions, I would only obſerve, that it is pity a well-regulated

regulated ſociety cannot more effectually curb this impious licentiouſneſs of thoſe ſons of darkneſs. If a wretch, neceſſitated by the cries of a ſtarving family to ſeek illegal ſupplies of bread, ſhall make an open attack upon me, the conſtitution of the realm conſigns ſuch a pitiable malefactor to infamy and death. And ſhall this miſerable object of compaſſion prove the victim of my reſentment, while the backbiter may, with impunity, revel in the exceſſes of his iniquity, and boaſt defiance to all laws? As this is a topic, however, which hath been deſcanted on by a variety of pens, I ſhall endeavour to enliven it with the air of novelty, by throwing my further ſentiments into the form of a viſion.

I found myſelf, during the ſlumbers of the night, in a very extenſive region, which was ſubject to the juriſdiction of a fury, named Detraction. The fields were wild, and carried not the leaſt appearance of cultivation. The tops of the hills were covered with ſnow; and the whole country ſeemed to mourn the inclement ſeverity of one eternal winter. Inſtead of the verdure of a pleaſing herbage, there ſprang up to ſight hemlock, aconite, and other baneful plants. The woods were the retreats of ſerpents; while on the boughs were perched the birds of night, brooding in doleful ſilence.

In the middle of the plain was a bleak mountain, where I discovered a group of figures, which I presently made up to. On the summit presented the fury of the place. There was a peculiar deformity attending her person. Her eyes were galled and inflamed; her visage was swollen and terrible; and from her mouth proceeded a two-edged sword. A blasted oak was the throne which she sat on; her food was the flesh of vipers, and her drink gall and vinegar.

At a little distance from her I observed Ignorance talking loud in his own applause; Pride strutting upon his tiptoes; Conceit practising at a mirror; and Envy, like a vulture, preying upon herself.

The multitudes who paid their addresses to this fury were a composition of all nations and professions, of different characters, and various capacities. There was the mechanic, the tradesman, the scholar; but the most zealous votaries consisted principally of old maids, antiquated batchelors, discarded courtiers, and the like. Each strove to ingratiate himself with the fury, by sacrificing the most valuable of his friends; nor could proximity of blood move compassion, or plead exemption from being victims to her insatiable passion. Some addressed this infernal Moloch with the very fruits of their bodies, while others were triumphantly

phantly chanting forth the extent of her power, and expatiating on the numbers of her conquests. At this incident arose in my breast all the tender sentiments of humanity that I had ever cultivated; and I began to blame my criminal curiosity, which had prompted me to ascend the mountain. But in a few minutes the whole scene was very agreeably reversed. For, towards the southern boundaries, I observed the clouds parting, the sky purpling, and the sun breaking forth in all its glory. When immediately there appeared marching towards us Good-nature, in all her pomp and splendor; arrayed like a sylvan nymph, and blooming with unstudied graces. She was of a fair and ruddy complexion, which received additional beauty from the frequent smiles that she threw into her countenance. On her right hand shone Good Sense, with much majesty and diffidence in her mien. She was an essential attendant on the young lady, who never appeared to such advantage, as when she was under her more immediate direction. On her left was Generosity, carrying a heart in her hand. The next that presented, was Modesty, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her cheeks spread with roses. Then followed a train of beauties, who, by the unaffected charms of their persons, made me desirous of a nearer inspection. Upon a close approach I

diſcovered that they were a tribe of Britiſh ladies, who were always fond of appearing in the retinue of the goddeſs, from whoſe indulgent ſmiles they received an acceſſional luſtre to their charms. I then turned my eyes towards the monſters I have above deſcribed. The principal of which turned pale, and fell down in a ſwoon from her throne. Pride ſhrunk into a ſhade; Envy fell proſtrate and bit the ground; while Ignorance vaniſhed like a morning cloud before the riſing ſun. As the goddeſs drew near, the whole collection of fiends diſappeared. The baſiliſk ſkulked into the glade, and the oak on which the fury was ſeated budded forth afreſh, where, ere the goddeſs walked, the flowers ſprang up ſpontaneous at her feet. The trees, ſurpriſed with new-born life, diſplayed the enamelled bloſſom. The tender roe was ſeen bounding over the mountains, and the little lamb ſporting on the hills. Inſtead of the briar and the thorn, there ſhot forth the myrtle and every odoriferous ſhrub. The voice of the turtle was heard in the groves, and the dales reſounded with the melodious harmony of the nightingale. In a word, the whole region confeſſed the happy influences of the deity, and charmed in all the genial ſoftneſs of the ſpring.

On MARRIAGE.

Felices ter et amplius,
Quos irrupta tenet copula; nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis,
Supremâ citius solvet amor die.

Hor.

SOME days ago I received an account of the marriage of a friend. When an occurrence of this nature casts up, the mind is insensibly betrayed into little animadversions on such a subject. This was particularly my case the night after I had heard of the nuptials. For, after having mused a while, I fell into an easy slumber, when fancy presented to my view a spacious temple, consecrated to Hymen, the god of marriage.

At a little distance from me I observed a giddy crowd of both sexes, who were making to the temple, in order to celebrate with each other the ceremony of the god. There was shuffled in among them a dæmon, whose form was so peculiar, and whose sway over the multitude so universal, that I shall here give my reader a description of him.

The

The name of this fury was Luſt. In the upper part of his body he carried the likeneſs of a human figure; from his middle downwards he bore the reſemblance of a goat: his eyes were turgid, ſparkling, and inflamed; his complexion was very irregular, attended with ſudden tranſitions from a ſanguine red to a livid paleneſs; his whole ſyſtem was frequently agitated with violence by the impetuoſity of ungoverned paſſion. His immediate follower was Diſtaſte, with a ſickly countenance and ſupercilious eye. The next, Remorſe, with a hat flapped over his face, and a worm gnawing his vitals. I was greatly ſhocked at thoſe monſtrous appearances; and the more ſo, when I obſerved how readily my fellow creatures gave into the hateful ſuggeſtions of the dæmon. But my ſurpriſe was abated on a nearer approach; for I diſcovered that his breath was of ſuch a malignant influence, as to intoxicate, and deprive of reaſon, all thoſe unhappy perſons, who had advanced within the reach of its contagion.

I was in ſo great a conſternation at what I had ſeen, that I heſitated for a while whether I ſhould enter into converſation with thoſe blithe adventurers, who had declared themſelves to be votaries of the temple. In the midſt of my ſuſpenſe, there came towards us a grave old gentleman, of a ſteady and compoſed aſpect, whoſe name was

Thought.

Thought. He was one of the principal agents belonging to the ſanctuary; and ſo high in the god's eſteem, that Hymen was never, or but rarely, known to give his benediction, at the concluſion of the ceremony, to any couple, who had not been uſhered into his preſence by this venerable officer. Upon his joining the company, to the majority of whom I found he was a perfect ſtranger, there were expreſſed an univerſal uneaſineſs and diſcontent; and many of them induſtriouſly avoided all converſation with him. But it is remarkable, that all thoſe who had thus imprudently turned their backs upon him, were laid hold of, in their return from the temple, by one or both of the melancholy attendants of the dæmon.

Hymen now appeared, marching with great dignity and ſtate. The firſt in the proceſſion was Love, in the form of a Cupid, who was continually practiſing a thouſand little arts and graces to draw upon him the ſmiles of the god; and, by the tender regards which he manifeſted to the child, it was plain that he was a great favourite.

Hymen followed, holding in his hand a flaming torch, which ſhone with the brighter luſtre the longer it burned. He was ſupported by Virtue, a lady of the moſt engaging mien I had ever beheld. She was cloathed with a white re-

fulgent

fulgent garment, having her head encircled with glory.

The next attendant was Beauty, arrayed in the moſt gorgeous apparel, and full of herſelf almoſt to diſtraction. She was handed along by Youth, a gay ſtripling, wearing a chaplet of flowers upon his head, and wings on his ſhoulders.

Then was diſcovered to view Money, an old man, meanly attired. His eyes were the eyes of a hawk, and the nails of his fingers were curved, pointing inwards like the talons of a raven. He was noiſy, impudent, and preſuming.

The retinue was brought up by Fancy, a lady ever varying her features and her dreſs; and, what methought was very extraordinary, ſhe charmed under every appearance.

The deity, immediately on his entrance into the temple, aſcended his throne, and ſat with his head gently reclined on Virtue's boſom. Love and Beauty took their ſtations on the right hand; and on the left were diſpoſed Money and Fancy.

The god quickly proceeded to the celebration of the nuptial rites; but there was ſuch a confuſed ſound of ſighs and laughter, that I could not give the attention which was requiſite, in order to furniſh an account of the ſeveral circumſtances which occurred. I noticed only, that many of the

the matches were very unequal; inſomuch, that Hymen joined the reſpective couples with reluctance, and but half conſented to his own inſtitution.

After the ceremony was over, ſilence was proclaimed in the temple, for the god was determined to decide a conteſt, which had been of long ſtanding between the perſonages who attended about the altar. Upon this declaration the multitude divided; and, according to the various impulſes of their paſſions, they took the reſpective parts of the ſeveral competitors. The young ranked themſelves on the right ſide of the throne; while thoſe of more advanced years poſted themſelves behind the diſputants on the left.

Love began with entering a complaint againſt Money, ſetting forth that his antagoniſt had ſeduced ſuch large numbers to his party, that as to himſelf his intereſt viſibly declined every day, to the great prejudice of that ſtate, in which the god had always deſigned him the pre-eminence. While he was purſuing his argument with great warmth, Poverty ſtepped out from amidſt the crowd, and ſtared the young plaintiff full in the face; who was ſo frightened at his rueful countenance, that he fluttered his pinions in order for flight. At which period Money roſe up, and addreſſed the judge, with ſhewing the neceſſity of his

his preſence for making the married ſtate as replete with happineſs, as it was originally intended by its inſtitutor; with other arguments, which, if they had been delivered with the ſame modeſty as force, could not have failed to create many converts to his ſide. This his ſpeech was followed with a thunder of applauſe from the company behind him. Upon which incident the old man began to triumph, and re-inforce his allegations; when in the violence of his emotions his coat flew open, and betrayed to ſight Cares, in the form of ſerpents, hanging at his breaſt. Hereupon Love ſtood up, and would fain have re-aſſumed his cauſe. But Hymen, who well knew the importance of their joint preſence to render matrimonial life comfortable, ended the controverſy, by propoſing the union of their families; to which propoſition they chearfully accorded. No ſooner were their hands joined, as the ſignal of their acceding to the terms of the god, than Love immediately lighted up new ſmiles in his face, and appeared infinitely more engaging than before. Yet the more ſurpriſing change was wrought upon Money, whoſe talons fell off like ſcales from his fingers; his eyes loſt all their former rapacious avidity; and the harſh lineaments of his countenance at once ſoftened into all the ſweetneſs of humanity. Love ap-

proached, and gently ſtroking the old man's boſom, ſtilled the hiſſing of the ſerpents, and aſſuaged the ſeverity of his pain. The conteſt being thus amicably adjuſted, Beauty next advanced, and, after many airs of affectation, put on a languiſhing look, and liſped out a mournful accuſation againſt Money (as Love had done before) intimating alſo his uſurpation over her, and the like. Scarcely had ſhe uttered three ſentences before there made towards her a griſly wight. His hair was covered with a hoar-froſt, his face plowed with furrows, and from his eyes there diſtilled a ſcalding rheum. When the young lady thus ſaw Age hobbling towards her, ſhe appeared in all the agonies of thought, the roſes left her cheeks, and ſhe ſunk down in a ſwoon. Hymen underſtanding the temper of the girl, that ſhe was proud and imperious, fond of governing, but at the ſame time incapable of ruling with propriety, diveſted her of a large ſhare of power, by diſpoſing of her frontier towns to Fancy; who now acts with unlimited authority, nor admits any perſon to pay his addreſſes to the gay virgin, without a prior interview with herſelf.

THE

HISTORY OF AN INN-KEEPER IN NORMANDY.

Quanquam animus meminiſſe horret.
VIRG.

WHEN a man narrowly ſcrutiniſes into his own heart, how little ſatisfaction ariſes from ſuch an inſpection! His goodneſs many times extends no further than to languid and impotent reſolutions; whence he hath the mortification to ſee, that his virtue is daily periſhing in its bloſſoms; while vice deeply roots itſelf in the corruption of his nature, derives additional ſtrength from the luxuriance of the ſoil, and is hourly making bold advances to maturity. At the ſame time that prepoſſeſſions and prejudices enthral his mind, they likewiſe enervate the powers of exertion, and thereby preclude to the captive all proſpect of enlargement. Paſſions are clamorous, temptations are numerous, and reaſon too frequently is of inſufficient force to ſilence the former,

former, and to repel the latter. Thus his breaſt reſembles a chaos, where diſcord, darkneſs, and confuſion maintain their empire, and triumph over the boaſted authority of man. Diſappointed and diſpleaſed with the picture which his own boſom exhibits of himſelf, he is naturally led to enquire into the cauſe of this involuntary deformity. Some writers have endeavoured to ſolve all difficulties, by affirming, that the creation of ſuch a ſtrange compound as man was neceſſary, to preſerve a due ſcale and gradation of beings. Others aſcribe all our errors and defects to the Fall, and thereby impute to the firſt parents of mankind the moral evil diſcoverable in the ſpecies. But, without entering upon a diſcuſſion of theſe ſubjects, I would obſerve, that the human mind, in its preſent ſtate, wears the appearance of an ancient ſuperb ſtructure, which hath formerly been injured and defaced by hoſtile injury. There ſtill remain ſtrong marks of its primitive grandeur, although ſeveral of its nobleſt apartments are ſo miſerably maimed and neglected, that they are now become, as it were, "an heritage for "the dragons of the wilderneſs."

It is a common obſervation, that neither the beſt of men are exempted from faults and follies, nor the worſt altogether deſtitute of worth and virtue; but ſometimes there is ſuch a mixture of

good and bad qualities, ſo great a contrariety both of ſentiment and conduct in the ſame individual, that when we ourſelves ſit upon the trial of ſuch a character, we are even conſtrained to ſuſpend our ſentence; and our judgment is not only embarraſſed by the interſperſion of ſlighter crimes, but it is alſo frequently perplexed and obſtructed in its deciſions, when actions of the blackeſt turpitude have been perpetrated by men whoſe general behaviour hath correſponded to the ſtricteſt rules of virtue and benevolence. Hiſtory, ſacred and profane, furniſhes us with ſtriking inſtances of the brighteſt excellencies, and the fouleſt blemiſhes, concentered in the ſame perſon. Oftentimes that predominant paſſion, which conſtitutes the very heroiſm of goodneſs, ſhall aggravate every feature of vice, if once it be enliſted under the banner of wickedneſs. That natural warmth of St. Peter's temper, which rendered his zeal for his injured maſter ſo conſpicuous, betrayed him into the moſt horrid oaths and execrations. But there is no neceſſity of a recourſe to ſuch diſtant examples; we ſhall find ſufficient ſcope for reflection upon topics of this nature amidſt the occurrences of our own times. Nor will the ſubſequent ſtory be a bad comment upon the hints already advanced, or too faint an illuſtration of the deplorable conſequences which now and then

then follow upon an unlimited indulgence even of the beſt of human paſſions.

An inn-keeper, at a town in Normandy, had eight children His wife, whom he loved with the utmoſt tenderneſs, died of a fever, after fourteen years cohabitation. He was inconſolable for a while; but at length he emerged from his grief, and transferred all his affection to the fruits of his marriage-bed. The income ariſing from the profits of his buſineſs was an incompetent maintenance for his family. Hence ſeveral of his ſons and daughters, when they had attained to proper age, quitted their father's houſe, and entered into ſervitude. So ſtrong was the Inn-holder's attachment to his children, that he regarded their departure in the light of a temporary baniſhment. However, there yet remained at home his eldeſt and his youngeſt ſon, who practiſed every filial duty, to ſupply the deficiency of his abſent comforts. Prior to this period, commenced a war between France and Great Britain; in the progreſs whereof the French compelled into their ſervice a multitude of young fellows, who were averſe to the profeſſion of arms. It unhappily fell out, that the Inn-keeper's youngeſt boy, a lad about ſixteen years of age, was ſeized upon by a recruiting party, and hurried into Flanders. The diſtreſs

of the poor Inn-keeper at this melancholy incident, would probably have been inſupportable, if his brother, who was the miniſter of the pariſh, had not uſed every argument, which reaſon and religion ſuggeſted, to alleviate the pangs of the bereaved parent. But although a courſe of time had aſſuaged the ſeverity of his ſufferings, yet his ſorrows were occaſionally quickened by the piteous tales the youth tranſmitted to him, of the many hardſhips he underwent abroad; by repeated applications of this neceſſitous ſon for money, and by the inability of the father to gratify the preſſing requeſts of a ſtarving child.

After ſome years were elapſed, there rode an officer into the yard of the inn, who, alighting from his horſe, called aloud for the Landlord. The maſter of the houſe, obſerving that his gueſt, by his apparel, was a man of rank, approached him with deference; at which time the Officer, fixing his eyes ſteadfaſtly upon his hoſt, acquainted him, that he was juſt then arrived from Tournay, and had been deſired to inform him of his ſon's health. The Landlord's fond heart bounded at the mention of a perſon ſo exceedingly dear to him, and he was urgent with the gentleman to perpetuate his converſation upon this engaging theme. But the Soldier replied, that he was neceſſitated to pay a few viſits in the town, and would take a more favourable

vourable opportunity to ſatisfy every enquiry of his hoſt.

About ten o'clock at night the gentleman returned to his inn, and told the Landlord, that he had invited ſeveral friends to dinner the next day; wherefore he directed a plentiful and elegant entertainment to be provided. At this protracted ſtay of his gueſt, the Inn-holder ſecretly rejoiced, hoping thereby to hear many particulars about his boy in the Netherlands. The Officer complaining of fatigue, and deſiring to be conducted to his bedchamber, the man of the houſe catched up a candle, and lighted him to his apartment. No ſooner were they both entered, than the gentleman drew a purſe of gold from his pocket, and gave it to the Landlord, with a charge to take care of ſo valuable a depoſit. Then, wiſhing him a good night, and reminding him of the morrow's engagements, he ſhut the door, and haſtened into bed.

The following day the Abbé called upon his brother, and, with great complacency in his countenance, enquired after the Officer's health. The Inn-keeper told him, that the Officer was well, and had ſet out early in the morning on his return to the army. "It is impoſſible," replied the Abbé, with a ſmile; "that very Officer will moſt "aſſuredly dine with you to-day, and give ſuch

" an account of your ſon, as muſt be productive " to you of a degree of joy, very little inferior " to rapture." The Landlord was aſtoniſhed at theſe myſterious words, and aſked his brother, if he was formerly acquainted with the gentleman? To whieh the clergyman made anſwer in the affirmative. " Who is he?" ſaid the Inn-keeper, with great emotion. " The whole ſecret," returned the Abbé, " ſhall be revealed to you at " dinner." Hereupon the Inn-holder appeared extremely agitated, and peremptorily aſſerted the departure of his gueſt at break of day. " Indeed " it cannot be ſo," replied the Prieſt. " There " is a happineſs in reſerve for you, my dear bro- " ther, which my heart ſtruggles to diſcloſe; " but the obligations I am under of ſecrecy will " not permit me to unfold this intereſting rid- " dle."

The maſter of the inn, whoſe face abundantly beſpoke the perturbations of his breaſt, ſtared upon the Miniſter with a peculiar wildneſs in his eyes, and ſeemed entirely deprived of all power of utterance. " Ah! my brother," cried the Abbé, " this is too, too much!—I cannot any longer " keep you in this painful ſtate of ſuſpence. I " beſeech you to recollect the features of the " military gentleman. Pray tell me, if you can- " not trace out the lineaments of your darling " ſon,

" ſon, under the badge of diſtinguiſhed merit?" This eclairciſſement had nearly proved fatal to the Landlord, who turned pale, trembled in every joint, and immediately ſunk down in a ſwoon. The aged Churchman blamed himſelf for the temerity of his proceedings, and wiſhed, a thouſand times, that he had ſuppreſſed this affecting part of his narrative. But, ſince he could not retract his ſtory, he cheriſhed hopes, that a fuller explanation of every circumſtance might deliver his brother's mind from this diſtraction of contending paſſions; wherefore, when the unhappy man was recovered from his fits, the Miniſter tenderly entreated him to compoſe the turbulence of his thoughts; and further informed him, that his ſon, by a late ſignal diſplay of valour, had been rewarded with a hundred louis-d'ors, and a lieutenancy—That the dear youth, noticing the officious aſſiduity of his father, preſently inferred, from thence, his parent's ignorance of him, now diſguiſed, as it were, by his improved ſtature, and the ſuperiority of his attire—That, pleaſed with this uncommon adventure, he had apprized his friends thereof, and appointed them to dine with him, that they might ſhare the joys of the family, upon his diſcovery of himſelf—To all which the Abbé ſubjoined, that this worthy and amiable child had brought his indigent father a purſe of

money, to obviate his preſent neceſſities, and to prevent future anxieties.

Scarce had the uncle mentioned this ſuperlative inſtance of filial goodneſs, before the Innkeeper dropped to the ground, writhed with violent convulſions; while the Eccleſiaſtic looked with inconceivable ſurpriſe upon the ſervants, who ſtood ſpeechleſs round their ſeemingly dying maſter. Amid theſe ſcenes of confuſion the maid recollected, that there was a vial of hartſhorn drops in a cloſet pertaining to the bedchamber where the officer had lain the preceding night. As ſhe was haſtening up ſtairs for the medicine, ſhe was purſued by the Miniſter, who endeavoured to arreſt her in her flight, that he might learn from her, if it were poſſible, the true cauſe of all theſe ſtrange and formidable occurrences.

With thoughts more diſturbed and embroiled than the ſtormy deep, he entered the chamber; where, finding that his ſtrength and ſpirits were haſtily departing from him, he threw himſelf upon a couch, which was accidentally at hand. After he had continued a few minutes in this fainting ſtate, he opened his eyes, and thought that he ſaw ſomething like a human form lying under the bed.

The figure powerfully attracted his ſight for a while. But when the Abbé had gazed long enough

to

to aſcertain the reality of the object, he ſtarted up from his recumbent poſture, and, collecting all his ſhattered powers into one effort, eagerly dragged the body from its concealment. To his inexpreſſible conſternation, horror, and anguiſh, the mangled corpſe proved to be the remains of the military ſtranger. The pious clergyman, penetrated through his very ſoul at this ſhocking ſpectacle, fetched a deep groan, and inſtantly fell dead upon his murdered nephew.

By this time the Inn-keeper was reſtored from thoſe dreadful contortions which had threatened his ſpeedy diſſolution. Raiſing himſelf out of the chair in which his domeſtics had ſeated him, he deſired to be taken before a magiſtrate, to whom he confeſſed every particular of this bloody tragedy. It ſeemed that the eldeſt ſon was the firſt who propoſed the deſtruction of the Officer. The father heard the overture with deteſtation; but the young man, having bound himſelf in a joint bond with his father for the payment of a large ſum of money, and hourly expecting his parent and himſelf to be thrown into a jail, urged the neceſſity of making the Soldier's purſe their own property, as the only expedient to ſecure themſelves from the miſery of confinement. The father warmly remonſtrated againſt ſuch impious meaſures; and likewiſe obſerved, that the guilt thereof

thereof would be highly inflamed by the confidence which his gueſt had repoſed in him. The ſon intimated that he thought it cruel uſage to be made ſubject to the penalties of a bond, for which he had received no pecuniary conſideration; and which he had entered into, upon no other motive, than the preſervation of his father from the reſentment of his creditors. The parent bewailed their complicated misfortunes; but perſiſted in ſuffering the utmoſt extremities, rather than embrue their hands in blood. When the young fellow noticed, that his arguments made no impreſſion, he then artfully enumerated the ſore afflictions which his youngeſt brother endured in Flanders, from cold, penury, and toil. Nor did he fail to inſinuate, that now an occaſion preſented itſelf of ſuccouring the wretched youth, who was daily ſurrounded with famine, diſeaſe, and death. The pitiable father burſt into a torrent of tears, and haſtily ſaid, "Whatever we are "to do, let us do it immediately."

Thus the poor lacerated heart, although it had reſolutely maintained its ground againſt the piercing ſolicitations of want, the approaching terrors of a priſon, and the importunate clamours of an undone child, nevertheleſs fell a ſudden ſacrifice to the inordinate tranſports of parental affection.

On the THIRTEENTH PSALM.

Quid purè tranquillet. Hor.

ALTHOUGH many and various are the purſuits of mankind after happineſs, yet the greateſt felicity is a conſtant ſenſe of the divine favour. The pleaſures which ariſe to the mind from a pre-eminence of birth, ſtation, and fortune are of a foreign and extrinſic nature. Hence we daily ſee multitudes poſſeſſed of theſe benefits, who are utter ſtrangers to ſolid and permanent ſatisfactions. But the good man, however deſtitute of thoſe incidental advantages, hath nevertheleſs an inexhauſtible ſource of comfort within himſelf. When he quits the crowd, and deſcends into his breaſt, he is ſure of meeting with the beſt of company there—God, and his own heart: while the conſciouſneſs of his integrity, and the approbation of his Maker, furniſh him with a perpetual feaſt.

Here, methinks, we cannot but pauſe a while, to reflect with gratitude upon the beneficence of our Creator, who hath thus, as it were, annihilated all invidious diſtinctions among mankind; and either hath placed the deſcendants of Adam

upon a level in point of happineſs, or lodged the means thereof within the reach of every man. It is not in the power of every individual to be rich and great in the world; but it is much in the power of every individual to attain a happineſs infinitely ſuperior to the joys which wealth and grandeur can beſtow. Wherefore, let not the poor cottager complain, that all his labour is expended upon procuring to himſelf nothing more than the mere neceſſaries of life. Such ſlender acquiſitions are truly valuable and weighty, upon condition that he improves his exiſtence to thoſe purpoſes for which it was graciouſly given to him. If the indigent part of the ſpecies did but carefully conſider, that to be good is to be happy; and that virtue and religion are accommodated to every ſituation and capacity, they would ſee abundant cauſe for thankfulneſs, even amid thoſe ſcenes of ſervitude and toil, which now, perhaps, occaſion envy, diſcontent, and murmur.

That frequent intercourſes with the Supreme Being conſtitute the utmoſt happineſs of man, is a propoſition which ſtands in no need of proof from philoſophical inquiries, refined argumentations, and laboured inferences. A very reſtricted underſtanding can comprehend this important truth. An arrant peaſant, without previous information, is fully aware of the vaſt emoluments which accrue

crue from an intimacy with an earthly monarch. What then muſt be thoſe exalted privileges, which redound from the favour and friendſhip of the Almighty Sovereign of the univerſe!

But I ſhall cloſe this ſubject with the opinion of the royal Pſalmiſt upon it; who diſcovers the high ſenſe he entertained of the divine preſence, by that bitterneſs, with which he bewails the interruption of it *.

ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM.

Quo te cœleſtis Sapientia duceret, ires. HOR.

IN a late paper I obſerved, that the higheſt happineſs of intellectual creatures conſiſted in a perpetual intercourſe with Almighty God. But, to prevent miſtakes, it may be incumbent upon us to enquire, what is the genuine teſt and proof of this divine communion. Our bleſſed Saviour hath reſolved this important queſtion—"Ye are my diſciples, if ye do whatſoever I command you." And again, "If a man love me, "he will keep my word, and my father will love "him, and we will come and make our abode "with him." Whence it follows, that if our

* See a verſion of the 13th Pſalm, inſerted among the Poetry, in vol. i. p. 113.

actions

actions be not suitable to the laws of God, all our pretences, warmth, and transports, are no better than the artifices of hypocrisy, the impositions of fanaticism, or the delusions of the grand enemy of mankind.

On the other hand, we are not to be discouraged at incidental absences, and dejections of spirits, when we are engaged in sacred duties.

Man is a composition of soul and body; and, during their union here, the former will be often interrupted in her religious performances by the diseases and imperfections of her associate.

Inattention, languors, and dejections, many times proceed from a temporary indisposition of the animal œconomy. A relaxation of the nervous system, an inequality in the circulation of the blood, and more especially a depravity of the juices (as the physicians term it) will have a powerful and surprising influence upon the mental faculties. I speak this in pity to multitudes; because I daily see pious and worthy persons afflicting themselves beyond measure, through the ignorance of this weighty truth. Besides, they would do well to recollect those gracious allowances, which our compassionate Saviour hath made upon record, for the omissions, frailties, and defaults of human nature. Even his disciples, who accompanied him into the garden the night preceding

preceding his crucifixion, could not repreſs unſeaſonable ſlumbers. It is alſo very obſervable, that the mild reprehenſions of our Lord upon this occaſion, ſuggeſted at the ſame time a tender apology for their miſbehaviour.

Prayer and meditation have a direct tendency to keep open the communication between the Supreme Being and the ſoul of man. But the public worſhip of God hath the poſitive promiſe of his more immediate preſence. What then ſhall we ſay to thoſe, who uſe a thouſand little pitiful ſubterfuges to juſtify their abſence from the houſe of prayer? I had lately an opportunity of introducing the ſentiments and example of the royal Pſalmiſt. With my reader's permiſſion, I will recommend to him another of David's compoſitions, where he will find this ſubject remarkably illuſtrated. I mean the forty-ſecond Pſalm; in the beginning whereof the author appears mightily ſolicitous to expreſs the vehemence of his deſire to approach again the ordinances of the ſanctuary. The alluſion, there mentioned, is of ſtronger import than what, perhaps, is generally imagined. It may be neceſſary to notice, that when a deer is cloſely purſued by the hunters, he takes ſoil, as it is called, that is, he ſpeeds into the water. This is commonly his dernier reſort; wherefore he makes the moſt powerful effort to

accompliſh

accompliſh his purpoſes. During ſuch reſolution, the natural timidity of his temper yields to a ſudden ferocity, which would very much endanger man or horſe, that accidentally obſtructed his courſe.

In the next place, the Pſalmiſt pathetically denotes the ſeverity of his ſorrows, while the Pagans upbraid him with the inutility of his faith and confidence in the true God. But, conſcious of the ſuperiority of his religion, he inſtances to himſelf that happineſs, which reſulted from his attendance upon the public worſhip; and takes occaſion, from thoſe prior comforts, to hold up his ſoul under preſent ſufferings; more particularly under his ſore diſtreſs of baniſhment from the temple of God. He not only expoſtulates with his own heart for its diffidence and fears; but he even reproaches his breaſt for its inquietude and deſpondence; becauſe at that very period he experienced the ſenſe of God's favour.

He likewiſe calls to mind paſt mercies, and the ſignal deliverances which God had wrought for him, at a time when he had as little encouragement to expect the interpoſition of the Deity, as amidſt thoſe troubles which induced him to pen this pſalm. Then he concludes with a ſtriking repetition of a former ſoliloquy, and of his purpoſed reliance upon God in all future difficulties

that

that might befal him. Thus the ſtruggle terminates, and the religious monarch goes off triumphant.

The paſſages which relate to the contumelious invectives of the heathen, are omitted in the ſubſequent verſion *, that the pſalm may be more extenſively applicable to every afflicted individual.

* See it in vol. i. page 114, et ſeq.

EXTRACTS

FROM

DR. COTTON'S LETTERS.

I Notice no complainings in your letter. Hence I hope you have attained resolution to pursue your plan without fluctuating. This unstable disposition is, perhaps, little inferior even to a state of real pain, mitigated one hour by false hopes, and exasperated another by false fears; but when a man is once determined, and invariably pursues the scheme he has laid down, then follow, as in a chain, satisfaction, tranquillity, and happiness.

Adieu, my dear friend; and number me among those who most esteem and love you.

AFTER all, dear Doctor, this dissatisfaction is very wrong; the world is a drama, and we must not expect to be all heroes and kings—There must be a subordination of characters; and if you and I are appointed candle-snuffers, we must take care to execute our province as well as we can.

can. I have ſaid candle-ſnuffers, as bearing ſome alluſion to our profeſſion; for you know we trim the wick of life. Indeed we ſometimes ſnuff the candle out, and, what is worſe, cannot blow it in again when we have done it.

" If I quench thee, thou flaming miniſter,
" I can again thy former light reſtore,
" Should I repent; but once put out the light of life,
" We know not where is that Promethean heat
" That can that light relumine?"

I know you have ſome qualms after you think you have ſnuffed *too cloſe*; but there are ſome phyſicians who will laugh at the tenderneſs of your conſcience; for they regard mankind in the groſs as farthing ruſh-lights all.

BUT in every diſtreſs, let prudence actuate us; particularly the prudence of holding our tongues; yes, and veiling our countenances too. I pray God befriend us, and then we ſhall not ſtand in need of the friendſhip of men.

THE metropolis is a ſtormy ocean—covered by a *powerful* and *numerous enemy*—No *ſmall craft* can poſſibly weather out the firſt, nor make head againſt the ſecond. Convoys are often im-

potent, often deceitful. What wife man, then, would put from fhore?—Farewell! May that Being whofe wifdom is all-fufficient, and whofe power is almighty, graciouſly condeſcend to direct and defend us in all difficulties and dangers. Amen.

WE fhould encourage and comfort one another, and agree in waiting patiently God's time to alleviate our ſorrows, not forgetting to embrace every help that religion and reaſon ſuggeſt. When the ſtorm rages at ſea, do the mariners forego their duty, and leave the ſhip to drive at the mercy of the wind? No; their courage riſes in proportion to the difficulties they meet with, nor do they quit the pump till they ſink. This ſhould furniſh admonitory leſſons to you and me; for certain it is, that a complaining, deſponding temper, unfits us for every thing, and renders our burdens more galling and cumberſome.

MY bed is often ſtrewed with thorns; but I muſt journey through life upon the ſame terms that many wiſer and better men than myſelf have done; and muſt reflect, with ſome degree of comfort, that I am making haſty advances to that ſanctuary,

ſanctuary, "where the wicked ceaſe from trou-
"bling, and the weary ſhall be at reſt."—Oh! my heart-ſtrings, break not yet, out of pity to the worthier part of my family, who cannot loſe me without ſuffering the greateſt inconveniences.

YOU, who know mankind, cannot be inſenſible to the evils which always follow upon the alteration of friends. I dare ſay you will approve a maxim, which I have conſtantly adopted through life—Never to ſtand upon my own juſtification to the man I love, when he appears conſcious that the right is on his ſide. For it is ten to one whether even the ſucceſs of my pleadings be not accompanied with the ill opinion of my friend: and the forfeiture of his affection and eſteem will be a poor compenſation to me for the vanity of a victory. Only groſs imputations, ſuch as reflect upon our integrity and virtue, ought to put us upon diſputation. Our arguments, like our ſwords, ſhould be employed for the defence, and not for the conqueſt, of our friends.

REFLECTIONS upon paſt indiſcretion are only to be encouraged, when we propoſe to

avail ourſelves, for the future, of prior miſcarriages; otherwiſe, ſuch reviews ſerve to gall the mind, and render us unfit for the general duties and offices of life. They are like to the falſe pangs of parturiency, which diminiſh the ſtrength and preclude the birth; and therefore, like all ſuch impotent throes, they ought to be opiated as faſt as you can. But ſometimes it happens, that they are reſtive to ſuch preſcriptions. When this is the caſe, they require a different treatment. Change the ſimile, and compare theſe painful thoughts to bold intruders, who are not to be prevailed upon by tender uſage, but who require force to expel them your houſe. Fairly give them battle. A reſolute and firm oppoſition, with a thorough determination to give them no future advantages over you, no future cauſes of triumph, will infallibly weaken their forces, procure a complete victory, and in the end regain peace to your poor diſtracted breaſt.

I have ſometimes thought, that when the mind is agitated by diſagreeable retroſpects, too ſtrong to be conquered by amuſements, and too numerous to be diſſipated by the ordinary buſineſs and occurrences of life; the mind, I ſay, under ſuch difficulties, reſembles a diſtempered body, which cannot recover its health till the unnatural ferment in the juices has expelled itſelf, which it

ſeldom

ſeldom fails of doing at the long-run, if no further pabulum be again thrown into the habit. This ſalutary criſis too may be conſiderably aſſiſted and forwarded by art; the ſtruggles of nature may be hereby alleviated, and a complete recovery inſured.

Once more, my dear Doctor, to the difficulties of our profeſſion. Indeed, indeed, or, to ſpeak after the manner of the Greeks, Amen, Amen, all that you advance upon this ſubject is too, too melancholy a truth. But as we, and many more deſerving than we (or rather, more deſerving than *I* am) are involved in equal difficulties with ourſelves, methinks our reiterated complaints enervate our minds, and render us leſs and leſs diſpoſed every day to combat with evils we cannot avoid. No mariner can ſoften the ſeverity of a ſtorm by ſighs and exclamations. But the ſailor, who ſtands collected, can many times obviate, by his fortitude and preſence of mind, thoſe dangers which would precipitate the timorous and dejected adventurer into the very boſom of the deep.—And thus much as to the moral view of theſe ills and inconveniences.

But when we regard all theſe diſcouraging incidents in a ſuperior light, and conſider the relations and connections we ſtand in to a future ſtate of exiſtence, ſurely we are culpable when we indulge ourſelves in proſpects *only*

which terminate with the grave. But say, if you please, that these secular interests are of more importance than I seem to represent them; nevertheless you will find my insinuations are just. For if a man cannot, by his anxiety and inquietude, alter the disposition of his situation, certainly it is folly to disquiet himself in vain; and grant him but a little patience, and the grave shall put a period to his sufferings. This patience will at least mitigate present evils; and it is much but reason and discretion will remove some of them. Wherefore, to conclude both my conversation and my paper, let you and myself act the parts of reason and religion; and in every difficulty, where the former cannot sustain us, most assuredly the latter will.

I MOST heartily wish you were in possession of a good-conditioned living. I mean, a benefice so happily circumstanced as would engage your residence thereon. Indeed, I hope you will never accept a living where you cannot reside comfortably one half of the year at least, and superintend the parish. I venture to say so, because I am fully persuaded in my own breast, that the accepting a church, with no other views than those of gain, is diametrically opposite to the spirit

ſpirit of Chriſtianity. It is true, this is a ſpecies of diſhoneſty which is practiſed daily by multitudes of the clergy. But numbers cannot give a ſanction to an immoral act. Whoever reads the thirty-third chapter of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, muſt tremble at the thoughts of relinquiſhing his pariſhioners to a hireling. May you ſeriouſly conſider the importance of the province you have entered upon; and, only ſeeking the approbation of God and your own heart, may you purſue thoſe meaſures of religious uſefulneſs, which alone can adminiſter ſolid tranquillity and comfort!—Alas! at your period of life and mine, we ſhould eye futurity, I mean a futurity beyond the grave, in every ſtep we take; and, by doubling our diligence for the time to come, endeavour to atone for our prior miſcarriages.

BUT, with your leave, I will conſider ſome other chapters in the Doctor's book—And firſt, as to the paralytic man, John, chapter the fifth. Mead thinks that the cure was owing to the mud of Bethesda's pool being impregnated with medicinal particles. Why then only a recovery performed upon the firſt perſon who ſtepped in? Would not the entry of the firſt man, by his additionally

ditionally troubling the water, effectually ſuſpend the mud, and thereby inſure ſucceſs to others? But his ſtrictures upon Poſſeſſions, however ſeemingly ſtrengthened by the authority of ſome great divines, are, in my humble opinion, very objectionable. If there had been no real Poſſeſſions, *why did our Lord countenance ſuch an error?* eſpecially ſince Dr. Mead ſays, that Hippocrates, or one of his ſcholars, wrote an uſeful piece to prove, that no diſeaſes were inflicted by a ſupernatural power, and that men ought to be accounted jugglers and cheats, who inſuſe ſuch notions into the minds of the people. And, immediately preceding this paragraph, he tells us, that phyſicians in former days took great pains to oppoſe the notion of dæmons inducing diſeaſes, becauſe people actuated by this perſuaſion neglected the proper methods of cure, and applied to religious rites and ceremonies. Again—the Doctor's objection to Poſſeſſions, from their wearing the appearances of diſeaſes, is of no weight; becauſe, ſuppoſing ſuch Poſſeſſions poſſible, the ſigns thereof muſt diſcover themſelves in ſome or other of the *ſymptoms of diſeaſes*. The uſual proof, which is brought to confirm Poſſeſſions, ſeems to me unanſwerable, I mean the entry of the devils into the herd of ſwine. But I will ſuggeſt another proof, which I do not remember to have ſeen in any commentators:—

tators:—When the ſeventy diſciples returned from preaching the goſpel, and *healing diſeaſes*, they ſaid to our Lord, with *ſurpriſe* and *joy*, that *even* the devils were ſubject unto them, through his name. Now, if diſpoſſeſſion was nothing more than healing the ſick, whence aroſe the diſciples' aſtoniſhment and joy? Surely, not becauſe they cured *diſeaſes* only; for this power was expreſsly promiſed them at their ſetting out upon their journey; and therefore they were *precluded all ſurpriſe*. But be this as it will, our Lord's reply plainly determines the ſenſe of that paſſage: "I "beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." This anſwer is unintelligible upon any other hypotheſis.

IN my laſt, I endeavoured to juſtify the explanation I had given of Solomon's portrait of advanced age, and ſecretly wiſhed for your approbation.——Formerly I told you, that I thought the Doctor had impaired the force of the miracle which our Lord wrought, in raiſing Lazarus from the dead, by ſuppoſing him to be diſentangled from his bandages, and to advance from the tomb in progreſſive motion.——The expoſitors tell us, that

that the design of the Roman governor, in giving our Lord the title of *King* of the Jews, was merely to *reproach*, and render the Messiah *ridiculous*. How this sentiment could ever be adopted by the Doctor, is matter of surprise to me; for Pilate (as is evident from the whole of the trial) laboured to deliver Jesus; and at last consented to his death with great reluctance. He professed, in open court, that our Lord was guilty of no capital offence; nay, he proceeded so far as to declare, that he could find no fault whatever in him. The narrative also mentions, that when Pilate heard our Lord assert his claim of being the *Son of God*, he was greatly terrified, and the more so, because his wife had, by a previous message, begged of him (from what she had suffered in a dream) to decline passing judgment upon the *righteous* prisoner; and the story, so far as it related to the Governor's transactions, concludes with Pilate's washing his hands, as a public declaration of his innocence with respect to his shedding our Lord's blood. Now, when all these circumstances are duly weighed, is it not highly improbable that Pilate would pour insults upon Jesus? However, a careful attention to a preceding passage unravels every difficulty. The Jews, when they observed the disposition of the judge to favour our Lord,

Lord, attempted to intimidate Pilate, by ſaying, that he was no friend to Cæſar. They intimated to him, that ſuch a culpable tenderneſs towards the imaginary delinquent, implied a connivance at uſurpation, and would draw down upon him the reſentment of Tiberius. This inſinuation alarmed both the ambition and fears of the governor, and extorted from him the condemnation of our Saviour. To ſecure himſelf, as much as poſſible, from the bad effects of any diſadvantageous reports made by the Jews to the Emperor, Pilate placed the ſuperſcription, I have been ſpeaking of, upon the ſummit of the croſs; and this ſuperſcription penned in three languages, that thereby the Roman ſoldiers, and the Greeks, (as well as Jews) whom curioſity had brought thither to be ſpectators of the execution, might *avow*, that the Governor had crucified our Lord, *becauſe* he had declared himſelf a *king*. Be pleaſed alſo to remark, that the nature of the puniſhment imported the crime to be a crime againſt the ſtate, or civil ſociety, and not of a religious nature; for Pilate moſt probably would not have taken cognizance of the latter; or, if he had done ſo, it is likely he would have puniſhed Jeſus according to the Moſaic law, namely by ſtoning, for this was the kind of death inflicted upon blaſphemers. In truth, he don't appear, in the ſubſequent part of the

tragedy, to be in a humour to pleaſe the Jews, by concurring with them in their deriſion of our Lord; on the contrary, he was piqued that they had compelled him to give ſentence of death againſt Jeſus. See his *laſt* reply to the chief prieſts, when they deſired him to make an alteration in the words of the ſuperſcription.

THE human body is ſo complicated a ſtructure, as to preclude ſurpriſe at our ignorance of the ſeats and nature of many diſeaſes; and, when we take into conſideration the age of the patient who is writing to you, methinks we cannot, without impeachment of our underſtanding, wonder at his deficient health. In the works of art there is ſomething analogous to this ſubject—A curious piece of mechaniſm, compounded of a multiplicity of ſprings and wheels, is ſo frequently impaired by time, and rendered ſo irregular in its movements, that the very artificer, who conſtructed the ſyſtem, is frequently at a loſs to ſpecify the defective particulars.—But I will no longer protract this tedious egotiſm of a trivial individual.

YOUR

YOUR very kind letter came ſafe to hand; and I embrace the preſent occaſion of replying to your favour, leſt an increaſe of the infirmities of age ſhould totally preclude me a future opportunity. I have paſſed almoſt three winters beyond the uſual boundary appropriated to human life; and, having thus tranſcended the longevity of a ſeptuagenarian, I now labour under the inconveniences and evils of advanced years. I am emaciated to a very great degree, and my trembling limbs are ſo weak, as to feel inſufficient to ſupport my weight. The languors likewiſe which I ſuffer are ſo frequent and ſevere, as to threaten an entire ſtop to the circulation, and are ſometimes accompanied with that moſt diſtreſsful of all ſenſations, an anxiety *circa præcordia*. I ſleep ſo little during the night, that in general I can riſe up at the voice of the bird, be that period ever ſo early. Nor are my mental powers leſs deficient than my bodily ſtrength; for my memory is notoriouſly impaired; and a ſubject which requires a little thought, becomes a burden hardly ſupportable. Are not all the particulars which I have enumerated, proofs of their being the *concluding* page of Shakeſpear's "ſtrange eventful hiſtory?" Yes, ſurely, my dear friend, when an inſpired author announces the ſame truth. Nor are you and I to wonder, that, in our paſſage through this world,

world, the weather and the ways grow the worſe the longer we travel, and the nearer we approach to our journey's end. The ſacred writer juſt now mentioned affirms, that when thoſe comfortleſs days arrive, which are attended with ſatiety, diſguſt, and inquietude, we muſt expect the clouds to be often returning after the rain.—Amid theſe melancholy ſcenes, it hath lately pleaſed Divine Providence to bereave me of one of the beſt of daughters, who never gave me a moment's uneaſineſs but at her death, and in that illneſs which led to it; I mean my daughter Kitty. "*Quis deſiderio "ſit pudor aut modus tam chari capitis?*" But no more of this awful occurrence.

I AM the more aſtoniſhed at ******'s engaging in a farm, becauſe he is a man of ſenſe, and muſt, upon due conſideration, be appriſed of his own deficiency in point of country knowledge, of various loſſes incident to this profeſſion, and the inconveniences ariſing from placing an implicit faith in others. Again—upon juſt reflection, he muſt be ſenſible, that no farm can turn to account, unleſs the farmer is at the head and tail of every thing himſelf, and accompanies the produce of his fields and folds to the market; but this is a ſervitude, which our friend,

friend, of all men living, will be moſt averſe to. The conſequence, therefore, of his new engagements will moſt aſſuredly terminate in diſappointment, anxiety, and chagrin; and, ere long, he will ſay with Soame Jenyns, in his Epiſtle to Lord Lovelace, or, rather, he will think with the Poet, that a country retreat ſhould not be encumbered with country cares:

"But then no farm I occupy,
"With ſheep to rot, and cows to die."

Let me add, as applicable to this ſubject, two couplets from an old favourite author of mine, Mr. Pomfret, once miniſter of Luton:

"No choice had e'er ſo happy an event,
"But he who made it did that choice repent:
"So weak our judgment, and ſo ſhort our ſight,
"We cannot level our own wiſhes right."

Well, my dear friend, what is the concluſion of the whole matter? is it not this:—That there is no ſuch thing as real unmingled felicity here below? That happineſs is all a vain purſuit, quite from the cradle to the grave? That it is altogether an imaginary acquiſition, which no man ever did or ever will poſſeſs, ſo long as he is a ſojourner amidſt ſublunary ſcenes?—We ſow hopes and wiſhes, and pray what do we reap? The anſwer is obvious—We reap diſappointment

and inquietude.—A miſerable harveſt! you will ſay.—True.—But nevertheleſs we repeat our uſeleſs labour; and thus perpetuate to ourſelves vexation and ſorrow. He then, my dear friend, is the prudent man, who is contented to take this world as he finds it; who reliſhes its comforts, improves its croſſes, and expects happineſs only in ſuperior regions.

Dear W.

THOUGH I have nothing more to ſay, than what I have already ſaid a thouſand times over, I cannot forbear repeating the aſſurances of my eſteem and value for you. Pray how doth Mrs. * * * *'s conſtitution comport with the preſent ſevere weather? March went out like a lamb, 'tis true; but methinks he hath reaſſumed his lion diſpoſition, and returned to us a moſt unwelcome aſſociate with April.—I am ſadly afraid that he will bruſh off with his tail the bloom of our wall trees, which you know will be no ſmall diſappointment to ſuch a garden epicure as I am. 'Tis plain he pays no regard to ſenators and almanack-makers, or he would not have pretended his old claims, and infringed thus upon the parliamentary alteration of our calendar.

I AM

I AM always ſorry when precluded the opportunity of converſing with you, conſcious that every year renders opportunities fewer; and that by and by will put an end to our correſpondence, and ſeal up our lips in everlaſting ſilence; for which reaſon, the remaining intercourſes of our friendſhip muſt riſe in their value, much after the ſame manner as we eſtimate our gold, the worth whereof is encreaſed by a deficiency in its quantity. For when a purſe of a hundred guineas is reduced to a ſcore, and never more can be repleniſhed, the reſidue of our coin muſt of conſequence mount in its valuation. This is certainly a fact; and, ſo far as it relates to our wealth, we are all willing to ſubſcribe to the truth thereof; but as it relates to our *time*, either we diſpute the fact, or act inconſiſtently with the inferences which it ſuggeſts. For what is more common than to ſee a man of *ſixty* perſonating the character of a boy of *ſixteen*, as to prodigality of time? But the oddity of this diſpoſition is the more extraordinary, when we conſider the abſurdity of ſuch conduct in old age, and contraſt it with the views and behaviour of youth. Grey hairs ſquander time, and hoard money; green heads are laviſh of both. Now the avarice of age ought to be revered; for, ſince the days of advanced life cannot poſſibly be many, the old man, therefore, ſhould not ſpend one moment but

in purchaſe of its value, becauſe he hath but few moments to ſpend. The riches he withholds, he ought to be liberal of, becauſe his wealth preponderates his time as to quantity. The young man is profuſe of time, becauſe he expects to attain to longevity (though, by the by, he is wrong in his arithmetic, becauſe he counts upon uncertainties.) However, this is not inconſiſtency of character: but what follows is great inconſiſtency, I mean the ſquandering away his money. For if he reckons and depends upon a multitude of years, prudence ſhould hint to him frugality; becauſe, in proportion to the length of his life, the greater and more frequent will be the demands of life upon his purſe.—But I am called away, and cannot finiſh this worthleſs declamation. I dare ſay you are not ſorry for it; for you muſt think me a dull moraliſt. I do aſſure you I think myſelf one.

DR. YOUNG is certainly as true an original as any of the authors whom he enumerates.—But indeed I think there is a difficulty in fixing the character of originality. Homer, ſays the Doctor, is an original. Yes, to us he appears ſo, becauſe we have no knowledge of any works preceding Homer's writings, from which

Homer

Homer might borrow his ſentiments and ſtyle; but, for all this, it is not impoſſible that he might be indebted to writers before his time. I think we ſtand a better chance to aſcertain originality, when we ſpeak of more modern authors. Shakeſpeare's volumes are in the hands of every body; and every reader will ſay that Shakeſpeare is an original, becauſe the peculiarity of his genius is not to be found in any other writer whatever. Now, had he aſſumed another's thoughts, and manner of compoſition, he muſt have been detected, becauſe he could not go further back for inſtruction than we can go; and, as multitudes have gone as far as it is poſſible, they muſt have diſcovered a ſimilarity in Shakeſpeare's writings, and the writings of other authors, if any ſuch ſimilitude was to be found. Bacon (Lord Verulam) was indiſputably an original; perhaps the greateſt mere man that ever exiſted, as to the powers of his mind. Take all the authors that ever wrote before him, upon the ſubjects he hath written, and he appears an Atlas amidſt ſo many mole-hills. Friar Bacon was likewiſe a moſt aſtoniſhing genius; but, in my opinion, originality doth not ſo properly conſiſt in the ſublimity of genius, as in the novelty of characters. The two Bacons, indeed, were originals, becauſe the genius of each of them ſtruck into new paths of ſcience. Bun-

yan, the author of the Pilgrim's Progreſs, was indiſputably an original writer, becauſe there never was (at leaſt ſo far as I know) any thing exiſting before like the Progreſs of the Pilgrim. Yet the greateſt advocates for John Bunyan's works cannot ſay that he had any ſublimity of genius. There is no compariſon between him and Sir Iſaac Newton; yet the latter, notwithſtanding the ſtupendous exertions of his mind, hath no claim to originality, becauſe thouſands have travelled in the ſame paths of knowledge; though none of his predeceſſors have ever advanced ſo far as he hath done * * * * * * *

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If I am an original, you muſt allow that genius is not eſſential to originality.

IN matters of abſtruſe faith, ſuch, for inſtance, as hath the Trinity for its object, there are, I dare ſay, no two men who think exactly alike; nay further, perhaps it may be queſtioned, whether one and the ſame man ever thought preciſely the ſame, upon ſuch topics, for two hours ſucceſſively. If this obſervation be true, as I am perſuaded it is in ſome meaſure ſo, how prepoſterous, as well as immoral, is it, to burn mankind for different opinions

in

in point of faith! According to my ſentiments of creeds, the moſt orthodox men themſelves, who ſhall abet perſecution in any degree, will richly merit to be well ſinged every time they ruminate on their credenda.

BUT what can a parent do with a child, now-a-days, who is deſigned for any of the learned profeſſions? Our univerſities are become ſo expenſive, and productive of ſo little knowledge to the ſtudents (in general) that even men of fortune cannot ſupport ſuch demands, and men of ſenſe cannot approve the conduct of theſe ſeminaries. If you ſend a boy for education to London, the hazard of a miſcarriage is ſtill greater; and the poor diſappointed parent hath a very conſiderable additional ſum to pay for the ſpeedier deſtruction of his ſon.

It hath often been mentioned, as a ſubject of admiration and complaint, that though the income of every trade and profeſſion be far inferior to ſuch incomes forty years ago, yet the apprentice-fee is ſuperior now to the demands of former times. Although attornies, at this period, ſwarm like locuſts, and hardly one in ten, when his clerkſhip is expired, can get ſalt to his porridge; nevertheleſs, an attorney ſhall, inſtead of ſixty, eighty,

or an hundred pounds (formerly given with a clerk) inſiſt upon three hundred pounds now with every clerk he takes. When apothecaries did not abound in country towns, and the revenue of this province was conſiderable, eighty pounds was eſteemed as a large ſum for an apprentice-fee. Now, that apothecaries are ſo thick ſown in every village, that each can hardly get bread, the ſtarving maſter will, notwithſtanding, aſk an hundred pounds with every apprentice. A Turkey merchant, who tells you that the trade to the Levant is not productive of five per cent. ſtill continues to aſk a thouſand pounds for inſtructing a youth in this branch of commerce, although merchants of this claſs made fifteen or twenty per cent. of their money in queen Ann's reign. How fares it with learning? It is univerſally confeſt, that is the worſt commodity you can carry to market; and yet, to aſcertain a very moderate ſtock thereof, requires a ſum of money to be expended, at this time a-day, which, when laid out fifty years ago, was almoſt as ſure an eſtate to the proprietor as a good freehold. But, beſides a bad commodity as to the inferiority of price, it is alſo a very precarious commodity as to the ſale. A man may expoſe his literary wares day after day, and year after year, without a ſingle chapman offering any purchaſe-money at all. The

ſcholar

ſcholar may read all day, and ruminate upon what he hath read all the ſubſequent night; he may riſe early, go to bed late, and eat the dry cruſts of carefulneſs, and ſolicitude, and anxiety; and, when he dies, is found expiring in a garret, of famine and a broken heart; or, which is ſtill worſe, and yet oftentimes the caſe, be agonizing, in his laſt moments, under all the penury, cruelty, and horrors of a jail. Many a learned man hath been able to ſet his ſeal to this truth, who hath never had any notorious guilt to upbraid himſelf withal; and of whom the worſt which could be ſaid of him was, that he died the dupe of credulity and indiſcretion.

But a mind at eaſe, and tinctured with religious principles, will reply, that all theſe diſpenſations of Providence are intended for the exerciſe of our faith, patience, and ſubmiſſion to the divine will. It may be ſo, for any thing I can urge to the contrary; but how a man can poſſeſs his ſoul in patience, who hath nothing elſe to poſſeſs, is a matter of great doubt to me. The wiſeſt and beſt of men, in all ages, have deprecated theſe evils, as greatly above human ſtrength. The neceſſity and *importance* of our daily bread is abundantly inferable from our Lord's inſerting this article in that prayer which he hath exhibited for the model and copy of our own prayers.—But I will not detain you any longer with this harangue. You

muſt

muſt almoſt be poſſeſſed of apoſtolic patience, to bear with ſo tedious a declamation.

I hope you are no ſufferer in your health by performing the laſt office of friendſhip to Mrs. R——. She engaged with the laſt enemy, and fell in the combat. We ſhall all be ſummoned into the ſame field, and periſh in the conflict; for there is no diſcharge in that war; ſo ſays Solomon. However, a greater than Solomon hath furniſhed us with conſolation againſt our defeat, by aſſuring us, that by and by the vanquiſhed ſhall prove the victors. But to drop all ſuch obvious remarks; and to enquire how it comes about that death is ſo differently regarded by different people. One man cannot comport with the thoughts of a diſſolution. The very mention thereof cauſes him to ſhudder, and, ſo long as the thought reſts upon his mind, it imbitters all his comfort. Another man talks of dying without emotion, and meets death with equal unconcern. If we endeavour to account for theſe different effects upon the principles of religion, we ſhall often miſcarry in the attempt. For good men are as loth to leave this world, as vicious men are. There are ſome pious perſons who, though abounding with grace, cannot be prevailed upon to think on death with tolerable ſatisfaction. And how many have I known, who were far from unbelievers,

lievers, yet whoſe characters were otherwiſe very faulty, that have gone off the ſtage with ſeeming indifference; who talked of dying as diſcharging a debt to nature, and have, to all outward appearance at leaſt, ſuſtained their ſpirits with uncertain hopes of faring as well as their neighbours in another world! Divines have reſolved all theſe appearances into an over-weening affection for the world, ſpiritual infatuation, or judicial blindneſs, &c. and perhaps theſe cauſes have ſometimes obtained; but I am inclined to think that the *cauſa proxima* is conſtitution.

I MUST own, that I heartily wiſh for a reaſonable and permanent peace. The immenſe national debt furniſhes a melancholy retroſpect to a thinking mind; and the continued effuſion of human blood muſt ſenſibly affect that man who is not loſt to all the feelings of humanity. We may talk what we pleaſe of American ſavages; but the ſavages of education far exceed in cruelty the illiterate ſavages of the woods. The latter are but brutes on two legs; and, to ſay the worſt of them, they can only be claſſed among wolves, tygers, and ſuch like inhabitants of the deſert; but the former are arrant dæmons, under the

diſguiſe of men. When David had offended his Maker, by ſhewing ſuch a diſtruſt of his providence, after ſignal deliverances, as to number Iſrael and Judah, the prophet gave him his choice of three kinds of puniſhments, *famine*, *peſtilence*, and the *ſword*. The royal delinquent prudently deprecated falling into the hands of *man*; well knowing, that a flight of three months, before a victorious enemy, was the foreſt calamity which could poſſibly befal him and his people. He was not to be informed what cruel lengths ambition would run, when flushed with a ſeries of ſucceſs; and therefore he wiſely gave the preference to correction from the hand of an angel, who could not be actuated by pride and cruelty, nor tranſcend the boundaries of his commiſſion.

Is the friend with whom you are going to ſojourn for a time, fond of a country retreat? Are the ſhades and ſolitude of ——— productive of joys ſuperior to the ſhining counters of ——? The pleaſures of wealth and diſtinction, I am as much a ſtranger to, as a man blind from his birth is eſtranged to the charms of painting. Nevertheleſs, I dare venture to affirm, that if there is any ſuch thing as happineſs (for I am not ſure there is any ſuch thing) it muſt be lodged in the private walks and by-paths of life. But, as taſtes are various in different perſons, I ſuſpect that I

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ſpeak with too much partiality to my own. I am one, who, being harraſſed with buſineſs, anxiety, and diſappointment, would think a bare ceſſation from the cares of life, *felicity* ſufficient. Yet ſuch *quietiſm* will appear only a negative bliſs, at beſt, to a man who cannot reliſh exiſtence without quick ſenſations and forcible pleaſures; nay, it is more than probable that he would not allow what I am ſupplicating for to be any bliſs at all; but a ſmart fit of the gout or ſtone would ſpeedily rectify his error, and teach him better philoſophy. For, let him be ſtretched upon a bed of torture during a few days, and, upon the termination of his ſufferings, he will readily acknowledge, that a mere ceſſation of pain is *poſitive* pleaſure. By and by he himſelf will find the human ſyſtem ſo conſtructed, that it cannot comport with a perpetuity of tumultuous joys. The active and vigorous exerciſes of youth have no charms for us in our advanced years, becauſe the powers of exertion have failed us, and our taſte for ſuch entertainments hath departed with our ſtrength. In old age, we covet very moderate ſatisfactions indeed. Like hirelings, worn down with the preceding labours of the day, we ſolicit the approach of evening. Not as formerly, perhaps, for the protracted pleaſures of the bottle, but for the ſilent comfort of ſtretching ourſelves upon

upon our couches, and ſinking into reſt. This is the happieſt period, to the aged man, of the whole four and twenty hours. It is to him what aſſignations and plays are to the young man. It is the point he keeps in view from the time he ariſes in the morning, till he returns to his bed again; and, being incapable of ſtronger delights, he rejoiceth in this quieſcent ſtate. This is certainly the nature and diſpoſition of our ſyſtem through its progreſſive ſtages, notwithſtanding the antiquated beaux and belles of the preſent century may appear as objections to my doctrine. In my opinion, they are the moſt contemptible of the ſpecies, as counteracting the laws of our corporeal and mental conſtitution. They reſemble eunuchs, who, conſcious of their deficiency, are irritated at their inability, ape a taſte for pleaſures which they can never enjoy, and thereby become the dupes of impotence and affectation.

Dear Doctor,

MRS. C——— affectionately concurs with me in ſending you the compliments of the enſuing feſtival. We moſt heartily wiſh you that chearful diſpoſition of mind which gives the reliſh to all our enjoyments; which alleviates the

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cares of life, and doubles the comforts of it; which, like the philoſopher's ſtone, tranſmutes copper into gold, and is a never-failing ſource of true riches; which is the beſt opiate under bodily pains, and the beſt prophylactic in mental diſorders. It is an elixir of ſovereign efficacy when it is genuine. But, generally ſpeaking, it is a compoſition which requires time, labour, and pains in the preparation; hence few there are who will be at the trouble and coſt of making it. They ſubſtitute a counterfeit in its place, which, however it may wear the external appearance of the original tincture, is nevertheleſs a moſt vapid medicine. The ancient heathens were ſo ſenſible of the value of ſuch a medicament, that multitudes of them turned chymiſts upon this occaſion. But, notwithſtanding all their boaſted recipes, they were found, upon trial, to be nothing worth. The only true preſcription is to be met with in a volume of an author, who was born about this period of the ſeaſon, ſeventeen hundred and ſixty years ago. It is truth, that the book is commonly exploded, or, at the beſt, but very lightly eſteemed. And I am inclined to think, that its preſent diſreputation is greatly owing to the multitude of copies which are ſpread every where up and down the kingdom. Could you ſuppoſe a deſpotic prince to call in all the impreſ-

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ſions extant, or prohibit, upon ſevere penalties, all families from reading this book, I verily believe its value would be greatly enhanced by its ſcarcity or perils; and that this bleſſing, like health, would appear to the greateſt advantage when once taken from us. What poor ſickly appetites are ours! that loſe their taſte for an entertainment of the moſt refined and delicate nature, becauſe the table is daily ſpread, and the doors of the banqueting chamber are open to every gueſt.——But I will not fatigue you with my allegories. If you approve them, you can carry them on yourſelf; and if you do not reliſh this manner of writing, I have ſaid too much already.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE thought much upon the ſubject of your late converſation. But I ſtill perſiſt in my ſentiments, that the frequent conſideration of death is the only expedient which can reconcile us to dying. It is very true, that dying-work is, generally ſpeaking, difficult work, and a dying-hour a moſt formidable hour! But will the difficulty or terror of that period be leſſened by inattention, or procraſtination of thinking? No, ſurely:—Thoſe parting ſtruggles of ſoul and body, and the horrors

horrors of the dark valley, will be encreaſed proportionably to our oſcitancy, or prohibition of thought. Why ſhould the good man be averſe to death? Is it not the gate of admiſſion into the brighteſt ſcenes and the beſt of company? an entrance into immortality, purity, and perfection? Who are to be our aſſociates? The ſpirits of juſt men ripened into excellency: an intercourſe with angels and arch-angels; and, to complete our happineſs, the fruition of that ſovereign exemplar of all perfections, the Deity himſelf!

Dear Sir,

LAST Thurſday night, ——— exchanged this life for a better.—Three or four days before ſhe died, ſhe diſcovered an univerſal languor, which portended a ſpeedy diſſolution. Upon the whole, her tranſition was eaſy, and much to be deſired. For, although a good man hath nothing to fear after death, yet he may reaſonably be afraid of the pangs and agonies which often accompany diſſolving nature. St. Paul himſelf, with all his apoſtolical attainments, could not repreſs his fears and anxieties upon this ſubject. Fain would he have declined this combat with the king of terrors; for, although he was ſure of coming off

more than a conqueror, through him that loved him, yet he apprehended that he might be greatly wounded in the engagement. He was abundantly ſenſible of the ſuperior happineſs of a future ſtate; he was likewiſe impatient to enter upon the poſſeſſion of thoſe joys; but the road thereto, which he preferred, was that which Enoch and Elijah had gone before. He expreſſed a ſure and certain hope of being hereafter admitted into *a houſe not made with hands*, a building of eternal duration! but, nevertheleſs, he could not eaſily brook the thought of his own tabernacle being firſt taken down. So far was he from wiſhing to be uncloathed, that he, on the contrary, wiſhed for the immediate ſuperinduction of immortality, or the abſorption of this preſent exiſtence in life everlaſting.

Dear Sir,

I TRULY think Mr. ——— an extraordinary man, when I reflect upon the meanneſs of his birth, education, and original profeſſion. It is very probable, that had he continued in the exerciſe of his former province, he would have appeared to a greater advantage, than by moving in a ſuperior ſphere. For that is ſuperexcellent from a bulk or ſtall, which is but an indifferent performance

formance when delivered from a pulpit. Novelty is the principal ſource of our pleaſure and admiration; and to meet with ſome bold outlines of ſenſe and genius, where we never could reaſonably expect to find any, muſt always be productive of delight and approbation. Another remark I have to make is this, that ſentiments and language in a familiar converſation, often create ſurpriſe and ſatisfaction; but when ſuch thoughts and expreſſions are committed to print, they are ſo far from charming the reader, that they occaſion diſguſt. The cauſe whereof is too obvious to be expatiated upon. I would therefore only obſerve, that if Mr. —— had, *viva voce*, uttered to us ſome of the incloſed eſſays, with his laſt upon his knee, you and I ſhould have deemed him a prodigy of a cobler, and judged him worthy of a more exalted occupation. However, I muſt ingenuouſly own to you, that, notwithſtanding all theſe ſtrictures, I entertain a favourable opinion of his parts, and am inclined to believe, that, if he had had the benefit of a proper education, many of us might have bluſhed at the ſuperiority of his attainments over us. I often think of ſuch perſons with ſecret ſhame to myſelf. For inſtance, Molly Leaper, who is my ſuperior in poetry.

Dear Sir,

IT is an aſtoniſhing affair, how ſome men, and even ſenſible men too, will make a ſacrifice of their underſtanding to abſurdities. However, this is what we ſee done every day, and more eſpecially in matters of religion. Mankind are afraid of exerting their reaſon, where it ought to be exerted moſt; and where a timid ſurrender thereof too evidently denotes thoſe unworthy ideas which we entertain of the majeſty of Heaven. But human nature is always for running into extremes. Either a man will believe nothing at all of Chriſtianity, or he will believe more than he ought to do. For my own part, I am quite of opinion, that the doctrine of election, carried beyond the boundaries which Mr. E—— hath explained, is productive of the worſt of evils. When adopted by honeſt minds, it generally terminates in deſpair—When adopted by knaviſh minds, it leads to every thing deſtructive of worth and virtue; and gives the profeſſors of theſe predeſtinarian tenets, opportunities of perſuading the greateſt raſcals upon earth that they are in a ſtate of ſalvation.

Dear Sir,

A GENTLEMAN told me yesterday, that a captain ——— was the present gallant of a pretty woman whom you and I know.

This morning, at five o'clock, I was ruminating upon the above-mentioned intelligence; and was thinking on the sensations which must unavoidably arise in the mind of a person who was hourly acting contrary to her own convictions, if a person religiously educated, and of infirm health, (which are circumstances that cannot fail of aggravating the error, and even of imbittering the pleasure of sensual gratifications.) The former is a source of horror, the latter a source of fear. If such a breast appears the object of detestation to a virtuous mind, it must likewise appear the object of pity to a compassionate mind. As Dr. Tillotson somewhere says, error is endless, and he who gets once into a wrong path, can hardly ever find his way afterward into the right road. Hence, how emphatical is that clause in the prayer of our Lord—"Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!"

Dear Sir,

HAVE you read Dr. Chandler's Defence of David's character? I am ſetting about to read it, and dare ſay that I ſhall be highly pleaſed with the peruſal. I have already dipt into the book, and, by a curſory inſpection, I am inclined to believe the reviler of the Hebrew monarch is a mere baby in point of learning, when compared to the champion who eſpouſes David's cauſe. But, all religious views and points of erudition ſet aſide, the hiſtorian betrays great want of ingenuity and candour, a defect that is hardly pardonable in any biographer, and perhaps altogether inexcuſable, when complicated with acrimony and malevolence. However, I ſhall take my leave of the diſputants for the preſent, and conclude my converſation with offering you an obſervation I have frequently made, in my retired hours, upon the more faulty parts of David's conduct; and upon thoſe authors who take a ſecret pride and pleaſure in ſapping the foundations of revealed religion. The groſſeſt of all the crimes which the Pſalmiſt committed, were the murder of Uriah, and the adultery that followed; or the infamous and adulterous paſſion, which prompted the royal delinquent to ſet a brave ſoldier and faithful ſubject at the head of the battle, with the baſe and wicked view of his deſtruction.

deſtruction. The fact is obvious, and will not admit one ſingle circumſtance to palliate the guilt. But, if the crime was ſuperlatively foul, was not the repentance of the criminal moſt exemplarily great? What bitter agonies of ſoul did the gratification of his paſſion coſt him! If any man in the preſent times ſhould commit an atrocious action, in no reſpect inferior to the ſin of the ſon of Jeſſe, and ſhould afterwards be broken upon the wheel for his wickedneſs, and be left to expire in the moſt excruciating torments; ſhould we not ſay, that the unhappy wretch had expiated his guilt by the ſeverity of his ſufferings? and, would not common humanity reſtrain us from all additional invectives, or proſecutions of his memory? In what degree was David's puniſhment beneath the execution now mentioned?—But my inference from this record of hiſtory is, in my humble opinion, a moſt important and a moſt comfortable concluſion. I mean, that the royal penitent hath exhibited, in his own example, one of the ſtrongeſt proofs imaginable of the power and force of repentance, to reinſtate us in the favour and friendſhip of Almighty God, although our offences ſhould, in their complexion, emulate the ſcarlet, or in their multitude, the ſands of the ſhore; for the aggravations of David's iniquities were doubtleſs very numerous. It is very true, that the

Scriptures in general repreſent the majeſty of Heaven as extending his moſt gracious pardon and compaſſion to all ſincere penitents, be their paſt iniquities ever ſo many or ever ſo inflamed: but it muſt alſo be remarked, that when the human mind labours under guilt of the deepeſt dye, the offender cannot apply general promiſes to the purpoſes of conſolation. You muſt produce a caſe in point, as the lawyers term it, before the wounded conſcience can feel any remiſſion of its tortures. The inſtances, therefore, of David's wickedneſs, and of David's repentance, is a ſcriptural chronicle of ineſtimable value, and ought to be acknowledged and received by us with gratitude and tranſport. For, though we be not all murderers, yet the beſt of us are grievous offenders.

I ſhould proceed to my ſtricture upon thoſe writers who pleaſe and pride themſelves in deſtroying, to the beſt of their abilities, the fundamentals of revelation; but, as I have already detained you longer than I intended to do, I will not treſpaſs on your time and patience any further.

INDEED, my dear Doctor, I am pleaſed with your commendations. It is natural for the heart of man to take delight in the applauſes of a friend.

a friend. Since you intimate that you ſhall reſt ſatisfied with the account I have given you of Dr. Chandler's book, without peruſing it yourſelf, I fancy that I ſhall conciliate your further good opinion, and furniſh you with an agreeable entertainment, by expatiating upon the ſubject of my laſt. However, it may be neceſſary to preface, that I had not time to read the Doctor's performance with that care it deſerved; that the book being a ſociety volume, I was obliged to ſend it away at a prefixed time; and that, for theſe reaſons, the ſubſequent narrative will probably abound with thoſe defects, which uſually ariſe from an imperfect attention, and defective memory. I ſhall introduce my converſation with obſerving, that the hiſtorian is a Goliah in impudence and infidelity. He calls David a thief, a cut-throat, and profligate libertine. Shocking invectives, truly! eſpecially to the ear of a Chriſtian, who knows that the Meſſiah, in his generation after the fleſh, ſprang from the loins of the ſon of Jeſſe. The impious author, juſt mentioned, diverts himſelf mightily with that expreſſion in ſacred writ, of *the man after God's own heart*; wherefore Dr. Chandler properly begins his work with examining into the true nature and import of this phraſe; and, with candor and juſtice, deduces the

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true meaning of it from the context of the words. Saul had received a poſitive command from God, by the prophet Samuel, to ſmite Amalek, and utterly deſtroy man, woman, infant, ſuckling, ox, ſheep, camels, and aſſes; but Saul, through a ſpirit of rebellion and avarice, ſpared the king of the Amalekites, and deſtroyed only what was *vile and refuſe*. God was offended at this contumacy, covetouſneſs, and prevarication, expreſſes the guilt thereof in the ſtrongeſt terms, and denounces the rejection of Saul from the throne of Iſrael. But it muſt be obſerved, that, prior to this period, Saul had heinouſly tranſgreſſed, by ſacrificing at Gilgal before the arrival of Samuel. The prophet had expreſsly told Saul *to tarry there till he ſhould come to him, and ſhew him what he ſhould do*; but Saul diſobeyed the prophet's order, and offered ſacrifice without the aſſiſtance or direction of Samuel. It is true, indeed, that the king tarried ſeven days, according to the ſet time that Samuel had appointed; but he did not tarry TILL THE PROPHET CAME; and although he had waited *according to the ſet time*, reſpecting the number of days, yet it is plain that he did *not tarry to the expiration of this period*; becauſe the text ſays, that "as ſoon as Saul had made an end of "offering the burnt-offering, behold Samuel "came."

" came." Then follows the paſſage with which the hiſtorian ſo mightily ſports himſelf.—" And " Samuel ſaid to Saul, Thou haſt done fooliſhly. " Thou haſt not kept the commandment of the " Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: " for now would the Lord have eſtabliſhed thy " kingdom upon Iſrael for ever. But now thy " kingdom ſhall not continue; the Lord hath " ſought him a man after his own heart, &c." that is, ſays Dr. Chandler, a man who will obey the voice of God by his prophets, and execute the commands of the Almighty. The Doctor's antagoniſt affirms, that the expreſſion *after his own heart*, denotes *the height of purity*. But, as Dr. Chandler very learnedly and judiciouſly obſerves, theſe words do not relate to David's moral character. They imply no more, than that Saul's ſucceſſor ſhould act anſwerably (in his regal capacity, and in his province of captain general over the armies of Iſrael) to the directions and commands of God. Although Saul was elected king, nevertheleſs it is evident, that God ſtill maintained his royal prerogative, and that the elected monarch was no more than God's vicegerent. Hence the Almighty commanded Saul to apply to, and to be directed in his conduct by, the prophet Samuel.

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That Dr. Chandler's explication of the phraſe is the genuine meaning, appears likewiſe from St. Paul's uſe of this expreſſion in the Acts: "I have "found David, the ſon of Jeſſe, a man after my "own heart, *which ſhall fulfil all my will.*"——I have ſaid, that God commanded Saul to apply to Samuel, &c.; but I do not mean an expreſs declaration of ſuch an order; but that the duty of ſuch an application is abundantly ſuggeſted by the whole of this ſcriptural hiſtory. And this truth is confirmed by Saul's opinion and belief of Samuel as a prophet from the Lord; and by the anxiety he ſuſtained, when Samuel refuſed all further intercourſe with him; and by the deſpair of Saul, when "the Lord anſwered him not, neither by dreams, "nor by Urim, nor by the prophets."

But, after all, I muſt ingenuouſly own, that there ſeems a little obſcurity reſting upon thoſe texts, which ſpeak of Saul's rejection. I am now referring to Saul's offering ſacrifice at Gilgal. The Philiſtines had gotten together a very great army, wherewith they were to attack the Iſraelites. The ſtrength and number of the enemy are particularly ſpecified; thirty thouſand chariots, ſix thouſand cavalry, and infantry as the ſands on the ſea-ſhore in multitude. Saul's forces were ſo diſmayed at the ſight hereof, that they deſerted almoſt to a man,

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and fled to caves, thickets, rocks, mountains, and vales, for their own ſecurity. The few that were about Saul's perſon, trembled exceedingly at the deſtruction they were threatened with. Their king, doubtleſs, was alſo extremely alarmed. He appeared to wait the arrival of Samuel with all the impatience of deſire. The prophet did not reach Gilgal till towards the termination of the time that was appointed. Under theſe great perils, difficulties, and diſappointments, Saul haſtened to perform the ſacred rites of ſacrifice; and urges, in defence of his doing ſo without Samuel's preſence, three arguments, which appear at firſt ſight ſufficient to juſtify him, or at leaſt to mitigate his fault. Theſe three motives were, the deſtruction of his troops, the delay of the prophet, and the formidable hoſt of the Philiſtines. Afterwards he ſubjoins a fourth, which implied the expediency of ſacrifice to render the Deity propitious to him, and the neceſſity he was under to conſult this only method of ſafety. Whence then came it about, that Samuel paſt ſo ſevere a cenſure upon this behaviour of Saul, and denounced ſo terrible a puniſhment as the removal of him and his family from the throne? The Doctor, as I have already hinted, condemns Saul for not waiting the arrival of Samuel at Gilgal, and imputes his offering burnt-offerings to a proud ſupercilious diſpoſition, which

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prompted him to ſet himſelf above the prophets of the Lord, and to act as arbitrarily in religious matters, as he was inclined to act in military and civil affairs. Nor muſt it be denied, that Saul's after-conduct ſeems to ſtrengthen the Doctor's ſentiments. However, if Saul's own words may be admitted, and his plea ſuppoſed to be genuine, then his fault appears rather to conſiſt in his diſtruſt of God's power to deliver him from his numerous adverſaries, than in a magiſterial contempt of the prophet of the Lord. But the degree of this crime, in Saul's caſe, ſhould ſeem very great, when we conſider the extraordinary interpoſition of God in the exaltation of Saul to the throne of Iſrael; the change of heart which Samuel foretold, and which properly Saul felt to be fulfilled in himſelf; together with the completion of many other predictions, which Samuel had mentioned to him, and which pointed out, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, that God *was with him*, and would be for him, under all difficulties and diſtreſſes whatever, provided he placed his whole truſt and confidence in that Being who had ſo ſignally appeared in his favour. But this ſtricture I only mention *en paſſant*, and repoſe no weight upon it. In my next, I ſhall reaſſume the defence of David; or, to ſpeak more properly, Dr. Chandler's defence of Jeſſe's ſon.

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I PERFECTLY coincide with you, my dear Doctor, in ſentiments touching revealed religion. It is undoubtedly matter of great ſurpriſe, that the generality of men ſhould be diſpoſed to quarrel with a ſyſtem, which is ſo evidently calculated to procure peace in this world, and everlaſting happineſs in the next. What would the community think of that man, who ſhould produce writings (wherein he was aſſured of a large eſtate in reverſion) to the captious inſpection of malevolent men, and be pleaſed with the imaginary flaws which they diſcovered in his title to ſuch an important eſtate? But the moſt unaccountable of the ſpecies are they who are truly moral men, and yet ſet themſelves in oppoſition to Chriſtianity. The common herd of mankind is againſt religion, becauſe religion is againſt them. Their hatred to ſacred truths proceeds from their apprehenſions of the vengeance which which will follow upon their lewd and riotous courſes. However, this is not the caſe with the moral Deiſts. Their conduct is far more unaccountable. When we have room to believe, that their behaviour proceeds from ill-grounded prejudices, the infection of bad company, and the bias of habit and cuſtom, we are ready to hope, from the influences of our good-nature, that by and by they will ſee their error, and retract all their former tenets; or at leaſt that they

they will drop all acrimony againſt ſo benevolent a ſyſtem. But, not to detain you any longer with ſuch an unneceſſary harangue, I ſhall now proceed to my former ſubject.—Dr. Chandler, as I have already obſerved to you, hath greatly the advantage over the wicked hiſtorian in point of erudition and argument. Whatever difficulties there may be in the abridgment of David's life, (and doubtleſs there are ſome difficulties in the ſacred narrative) yet moſt certainly they are not of ſuch weight as to juſtify a thorough diſbelief of the worthy part of David's character, much leſs to juſtify raillery and invectives againſt the obſcure circumſtances of many texts. 'Tis plain, beyond diſpute, that many paſſages are falſely tranſlated, many are of doubtful ſignification, even in the original Hebrew, and there are many prohibitions, poſitive commands, and particular cuſtoms and uſages, all which, at this diſtance of time, appear dark and inexplicable to us. But theſe objections are only ſuch as may be urged againſt all ancient hiſtories almoſt, eſpecially againſt ſhort compendiums, or general abſtracts, the deſign whereof is only to exhibit the grand outlines, or characteriſtical marks of perſons and things. The Doctor's antagoniſt appears ſenſible of this truth, by his pitiful ſubterfuges, in having recourſe to palpable falſhoods, that he might fill up the picture with ſuch colours

colours as he thought moſt conducive to his own purpoſes. For inſtance, he ſays, that the Jews were violently bigotted to their prieſts, and were ever ready to execute what the eccleſiaſtics and the pretended prophets dictated to them. Upon this aſſertion he proceeds to inſinuate, that David carried his cauſe by ſecuring the prieſthood in his intereſt.—But, as the Doctor juſtly notices, there were no people under the heavens more reſtive and rebellious than the Jews in matters relative to religion. They were ſo far from repoſing an implicit faith in what their ſacred teachers taught, that they were continually running counter to their doctrines, and falling into idolatry. 'Tis humorous enough to ſee what contradictory arguments the Deiſts make uſe of to ſupport their cauſe. I remember Lord Shafteſbury argues directly contrary to the hiſtorian; for his Lordſhip, who wounds religion through the ſides of the Jews, repreſents this nation as gloomy, ſtubborn, and refractory to their prieſts. And it cannot be denied that this was too much their diſpoſition. The hiſtorian, who abſurdly maintains that Samuel's anointing of Saul was all a juggle between them, (a point that the prophet and Saul had ſettled beforehand) cannot, methinks, with a grave face, continue at leaſt to believe, that the authority of the prieſthood prevailed powerfully

over king and people, when Saul moſt inhumanly butchered in one day fourſcore and five perſons who wore a linen ephod; and ſmote all the city of the prieſts with the edge of the ſword, extending his maſſacre not to the men only, but alſo to defenceleſs women and tender ſucklings, nay, to the very brute part of the city, oxen, aſſes, and ſheep. A ſhrewd ſign indeed of Saul's being prieſt-rid! Indiſputably, the account given of the Jews in the Old Teſtament, from the beginning almoſt to the end of it, abundantly demonſtrates, that neither they nor their monarchs were ſwayed by prieſts or prophets. Oh! what a bitter charge did our bleſſed Lord bring againſt this obſtinate and cruel people! "*Thou that killeſt the prophets and "ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee,*" &c. The preceding verſes of this chapter are very explicit upon this melancholy ſubject.

But to go on.—The *hiſtorian* breaks all bounds of decency in his comment upon David's reception of Abigail. He tells you, that David, at the head of a numerous banditti, was for putting an old farmer under contribution. That the poor man grew ſurly at the unreaſonable demand of this freebooter, and juſtly with-held from him what was demanded. That Abigail, hearing of David's reſentment, ſet forward as ſoon as ſhe could to meet him, and, expoſing her charms, ſpeedily ſub-

dued

dued the wrath of the amorous hero. This interview furniſhes the hiſtorian with more than luſcious ſuggeſtions; for he hath the impudence to ſay, that when Nabal heard what was the price of the reconciliation, the cuckold broke his heart, and died a few days afterward. To prove this wicked allegation, he lays a mighty ſtreſs upon thoſe particular words, "accepted thy perſon;" which are printed in capitals to draw the attention, and provoke the ſneers of the reader. But the impious witling, by his utter ignorance of the Hebrew tongue, hath rendered himſelf an eaſy conqueſt to the Doctor; who, you may be ſure, would not be ſparing in his chaſtiſements upon this occaſion. It ſeems this phraſe, "Accepted "thy perſon," occurs in other parts of ſcripture; and the words literally tranſlated run thus; "I have "received and accepted thy faces." Theſe very words are uſed by the angel to Lot, (Gen. xix. 21.) implying, "I have granted thy requeſt." So it is likewiſe ſaid, that God accepted Job—in the original, "the face or faces of Job;" that is, was gracious and favourable to him. Again, (ſee Proverbs vi. 35) "He will not regard any ran-"ſom"—the Hebrew phraſe is, "he will not ac-"cept the face of any ranſom;" meaning, he will not eſteem or accept any propitiation as a ranſom. Whence it follows, that where our tranſlation ſays,

" David accepted the perſon of Abigail," the ſenſe is, that he granted her requeſt, and, upon her interpoſition, would not revenge himſelf upon Nabal. Thus all the hiſtorian's levity and mirth vaniſh into ſmoke, and prove his head as weak as his heart is bad.—However, this tranſaction in David's life ſeems not altogether juſtifiable in every part. Perhaps the whole of this ſtory hath not been handed down to us. All we can learn at preſent is this, that David and his retinue carefully forbore to injure Nabal in his property, at a period when it was in their power to have ſtript him of all that he had. Nabal's own ſervants bore teſtimony to this truth—Nay, they went further, and declared to their miſtreſs, that David had employed his little army in protecting Nabal's flocks, and the ſhepherds that tended them. The expreſſion uſed on this occaſion is very ſtrong. " They were a wall to us both by night and by " day." After ſhewing ſuch clemency, and doing ſuch a kind office, David might doubtleſs have reaſonably expected, that Nabal ſhould have aſſiſted him in his wants, and not have returned a brutal denial, accompanied with invective and abuſe. But at the ſame time it muſt be acknowledged, that David kindled into a faulty reſentment, when he determined, not the death only of Nabal, but the death likewiſe of every male belonging to his

his family. This was a ſhocking reſolve, and, had he executed it, we muſt have held ſuch an action in the utmoſt abhorrence. Indeed David himſelf appeared ſenſible of its guilt, by his expreſſions of gratitude to God for reſtraining him from ſhedding blood, and avenging himſelf with his own hand. This haſty and cruel purpoſe of David cannot be defended. But although we allow it to be ever ſo bad, I doubt we ſhall find it a ſally of paſſion too natural to the common depravity of the human heart; and it is well if many, who condemn this extravagant warmth in David, can clear themſelves from the imputation of immoderate anger, even under *trifling* provocations.

However, without an attempt to extenuate this raſh determination, but leaving it to ſtruggle with its own guilt, I cannot ſee that the main of a man's character is to be decided by ſtarts of temerity and reſentment. What would the hiſtorian ſay, if his thoughts and reſolutions were to be weighed in the balance of impartial rectitude? David had his failings, and very great failings too; but it is likewiſe to be taken into the account, that he had very great excellencies. Of the two favourites who ſtand upon record for the pre-eminence of their characters, and who were remarkably diſtinguiſhed by God, in their being exempted from death, what ſays St. James, particu-

larly of one of them? "That he was a man ſub-
"ject to like paſſions as we are." Now, it muſt be owned, that David laboured, in common with the reſt of the ſpecies, under the paſſions, frailties, and defects of human nature. He was conquered by the prevalence of temptations, and the corruption of his own heart. But againſt the enormity of his crimes, ſet down the anguiſh of his ſoul, and the ſincerity of his repentance; his zeal for the worſhip of the true God, the fervour of his devotion, and the frequency of his prayers; in a word, balance the excellencies of the ſaint againſt the exceſſes of the ſinner, and David will be found to have attained that perfection of penitence, which is couched in that gracious declaration of our Lord, "That joy ſhall be in heaven over "one ſinner that repenteth, more than over "ninety and nine juſt perſons which need no re-"pentance."

But it is high time for me to diſmiſs you. Indeed, my dear Doctor, when I firſt undertook to give you a ſpecimen of Chandler's performances, I never thought I ſhould have protracted my converſation to ſuch an unreaſonable length. However, I muſt crave your patience for one long letter more upon this ſubject, which I deſign ſhall compleat all I have to ſay upon it. By and

by

by my children will be at home, and their little impertinences will be your ſecurity againſt prolix epiſtles.

Dear Sir,

THE account which the Old Teſtament gives of David's actions ought to be conſidered by us as a very ſmall abridgment. Had a fuller hiſtory been neceſſary, undoubtedly we had been favoured with it. But whatever obſcurity may reſt upon ſome part of David's conduct, yet it is plain, that thoſe parts of it, which immediately relate to our edification and comfort, are abundantly explicit. What referred to his regal capacity can affect us but very remotely. We are chiefly intereſted in thoſe tranſactions, that repreſent him as a great ſinner and a great penitent. This hint leads me to reflections upon his crimes of murder and adultery; the former was the conſequence of the latter. Dr. Chandler, in my humble opinion, hath not diſplayed his uſual candour and ſtrength of argument, in his criticiſm upon this ſubject. In truth, what he advances, in order to ſoften the king's guilt, ſavours of a puerility. The actions are deteſtable, and cannot admit of any palliation whatever. Indeed they are additionally heinous,

when we conſider that great and illuſtrious officer to whom the injuries were offered. There is ſomething ſo manly and heroical in Uriah's refuſing to paſs the night in dalliance with his wife, while his fellow ſoldiers lay encamped in the open fields, that we cannot read this paſſage, without the higheſt admiration at his triumph over ſenſe and paſſion. On the other hand, we cannot, without grief and abhorrence, behold David practiſing the moſt ſhameful artifices to defeat the reſolution and virtue of his general. The Scripture declares, that David even attempted to inflame Uriah by intemperance. But, notwithſtanding the temptation ſo far ſucceeded, as to occaſion drunkenneſs, yet the fumes of wine could not get the better of the ſoldier's reſolve; for it is expreſsly ſaid, that "he "went not to his own houſe." David was chagrined at this diſappointment; wherefore, being partly agitated by anger, and partly by fear of Bathſheba's pregnancy making a diſcovery of his crime, he determined at all events to deſtroy the huſband. The method he purſued appears to be peculiarly baſe. David, conſcious of the valour and intrepidity of this faithful Hittite, meditates a ſcheme, whereby the excellent talents of that glorious general ſhould work the means of his deſtruction. His royal maſter knew very well, that if he was placed in the front of the battle, the

degree

degree of danger would furniſh freſh acceſſions of courage, and diſpoſe him to ſuch exertions of military proweſs, as could hardly fail to prove the ruin of that heart wherein the moſt illuſtrious qualities were centered. However, David was determined, that if there was any thing farther to be done, which could enſure the death of Uriah, it ſhould by no means be omitted. Guilt ſuggeſted, that there might be a bare poſſibility of Uriah's eſcaping deſtruction, by the aſſiſtance and bravery of his own troops. Wherefore David ſent a poſitive command to Joab, that when he ſaw Uriah engaged in the hotteſt of the battle, he ſhould order the forces of the Iſraelites to fall back, and reſign their leader to the vengeance of the enemy.—This is a true and genuine detail of the aggravated circumſtances of this dreadful murder; and, whoever reads the melancholy page, from which the above-mentioned particulars are drawn, muſt acknowledge, that the ſacred penman hath not made the leaſt attempt to palliate the enormities of David's tranſgreſſion. Why then ſhould Dr. Chandler ſay, that the royal delinquent diſcovered a greatneſs of mind in the very method which he had planned for the death of his general? The Doctor intimates, that David could have diſpatched Uriah by private aſſaſſination; but choſe that, as he was a ſoldier, he ſhould fall in the bed of honour,

nour, fighting for his country. Surely this resource is a pitiful subterfuge, and reflects double infamy upon the head of the monarch. For where is the honour of a scheme, founded in adultery, and carried into execution by craft and dissimulation? Since the death of Uriah was a point determined, was not the guilt of this murder enhanced by the fraud and prevarication of the author thereof? Nay, private assassination had, in all probability, been a more eligible method of death. For a single thrust of a poniard was sufficient to preclude all future complaints of the injured husband. The end could have been answered by a single blow; whereas the exposure of this truly great man to the arrows and swords of a whole army, rendered him obnoxious to a multitude of wounds; and thereby superadded the charge of cruelty to the other crimes of David. I will not take upon me to prove, that the king was aware of these circumstances of pain and suffering, because the scripture is silent about them. But I will venture to affirm, that such a reflection was very natural, and could only have been over-ruled and stifled by the fears, hurries, and anxieties of a guilty mind. Nor can I quit this subject without noticing the inhumanity of David's appointing Uriah to carry the letter, which contained the warrant for his destruction. Must not the king

appear

appear a moſt ſhocking example of perfidy, cruelty, and folly, in the eyes of Joab, when he commanded him to conſign Uriah over to certain death, without exhibiting the ſmalleſt accuſation againſt this devoted victim? When a MILITARY monarch could preach, or at leaſt inſinuate diſobedience and defection to his own army! and direct theſe orders to take place at a period, and under circumſtances, which notoriouſly inflamed the guilt of the king; becauſe Uriah was then fighting for his unfaithful maſter; and the gallantry with which, in all likelihood, he fought, and the peculiar perils to which he was expoſed by leading the van of the army, and heading the attack, gave him a double claim to all the poſſible aid which the ſoldiers could afford him! No, my good friend, this part of David's behaviour will admit of no ſoftenings whatever. Let it ſtand forth in its genuine colours of guilt and deteſtation. Let it be an everlaſting leſſon to the ſons of men, of the power of temptations, of the weakneſs of human virtue, and of the concatenation of vice. When we ſee ſo great a king and ſoldier acting the part of an hypocrite, a coward, and a ruffian; ſo good a man betrayed, by the heat of paſſion and the gradation of ſin, into the foulеſt of all enormities, adultery and murder; let us tremble for the inſufficiency of our own virtue, and the treachery

of

of our own hearts. Inſtead of paſſing a ſevere cenſure upon the royal criminal, let us deſcend into our own breaſts, and ſeriouſly reſolve to amend what we find amiſs there. If we are ſincere and impartial in our ſearch, we ſhall meet with ample matter wherewith to reproach our own hearts, and fee ſo much to condemn and rectify in ourſelves, that we ſhall have no time to criticiſe with malignity and acrimony upon the ſins and miſcarriages of the Hebrew king. In a word, let us, with grateful minds, adore Almighty God for his gracious diſplay of mercy and forgiveneſs, ſo glorioufly illuſtrated in the example of David; whence we may humbly hope, that, through the interceſſion of a Redeemer, we may find pardon and acceptance at the throne of grace.

But to proceed.—According to the order of time, I ſhould before have mentioned an action of David, which the hiſtorian treats with great ſeverity. Nor do I know, indeed, how it can be juſtified. I ſpeak in reference to David's offering his ſervice to the king of the Philiſtines, who were marching to attack the Iſraelites. The favours which David had received from Achiſh, were doubtleſs not ſufficiently obligatory to vindicate David in fighting againſt his own countrymen. Dr. Chandler is at a loſs what to ſay in David's behalf:

half: and, this moment, a thought occurs to me, which throws further obſcurity upon this paſſage. How could David, conſiſtently with loyalty and duty, join an army of aliens, and war againſt HIS KING? Now, it is very obſervable, that upon all occaſions David expreſſes the higheſt reverence for the Lord's anointed. When he had Saul in his immediate power, and was counſelled by Abiſhai to ſmite his enemy (or to give Abiſhai leave to ſmite him) David abhorred the advice, and replied, "Deſtroy him not—For who can ſtretch "forth his hand againſt the Lord's anointed and be "guiltleſs?" It muſt alſo be remarked, that in all his expoſtulations with Saul, he inſiſted upon the loyalty of his principles, and challenged the king to point out a ſingle breach of his fidelity. Jonathan urged the ſame argument repeatedly, in order to extinguiſh his father's reſentment. How then came it about, that David ſhould, all of a ſudden, forget the duty he owed his king, and endeavour to enter into a foreign ſervice, when the armies of the foreigner were deſigned to fight againſt Saul? It was more agreeable to reaſon, fidelity, and religion, for David to have waved all tenders of his ſervices, even although Achiſh had importunately ſolicited them. But, thus unaſked, to plead with an idolatrous prince for liberty of warring againſt Saul and the Iſraelites,

elites, appears to be an enormous act of rebellion. The difficulty too is ſtill encreaſed, when we reflect, that at this very period David was the anointed ſucceſſor to Saul; and conſequently obliged to treat the Iſraelites as ſubjects, and not as enemies. Here, therefore, SEEMS to be accumulated guilt; namely, the default of his allegiance to his king and of duty to his country.

The ſtory of David's behaviour to Shimei is very dark, and I think very far from being cleared up by Dr. Chandler. Shimei had treated the broken-hearted king with unparalleled cruelty and inſolence. But David, like a great and good man, forgave the rebellious miſcreant, and confirmed his pardon with the ſanction of an oath. Nevertheleſs, upon his death-bed, he charges his ſon Solomon not to hold Shimei guiltleſs; but to bring his hoary head to the grave with blood. How can this order be reconciled with that text, "Therefore the king ſaid unto Shimei, *Thou* "*ſhalt not die*; and the king ſware unto him?" If I remember aright (for I read Chandler's book very curſorily) the Doctor ſuppoſes, that, notwithſtanding David had generouſly pardoned Shimei, yet the ungrateful offender privately continued to plot againſt the family upon the throne. And the Doctor forms theſe ſentiments from David's words and Solomon's conduct. The dying

monarch had ſaid to his ſon, concerning Shimei, "Thou art a wiſe man, and knoweſt what thou "oughteſt to do with him; but his hoar-head "bring thou down to the grave with blood." As if he had ſaid, Thou art a man of ſenſe and penetration, thou knoweſt the ſeditious and turbulent principles of Shimei; wherefore, watch an opportunity of puniſhing his treachery with death.—And afterwards we are told, that Solomon preſcribed ſuch confinement and narrow boundaries to Shimei, which kings are accuſtomed to appoint, when they ſuſpect a former rebel's attachment to his old cauſe. "And the king ſent "and called for Shimei, and ſaid unto him, Build "thee a houſe in Jeruſalem, and dwell there, "and go not forth thence any whither. For it "ſhall be, that on the day thou goeſt out, and "paſſeſt over the brook Kidron, thou ſhalt know "for certain that thou ſhalt ſurely die." A few verſes afterwards we find, that Shimei broke his promiſe, and accordingly was put to death.

But I would notice, that however deſervedly Shimei was deſtroyed, yet the ſcripture by no means aſſigns his breach of covenant to any ſeditious views. Three years he had paſt in his houſe at Jeruſalem, without any ſuſpicion of treaſonable practices. The occaſion of his leaving the

the city was the flight of two ſervants into the country of the Philiſtines; Shimei went in purſuit of the fugitives, and brought them from Gath. Solomon was made acquainted with Shimei's conduct, and immediately commanded Benaiah to ſlay him.

I ſhall conclude all my tedious commentaries with an ingenious ſtricture of Dr. Chandler upon theſe words—"And he brought forth the people "that were therein, and put them under ſaws and "under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, "and made them paſs through the brick-kiln."

The Doctor acknowledges, that the Hebrew words here are difficult to be underſtood. But by a careful enquiry into the roots from whence theſe words are derived, he thinks that the true meaning of them is, that David, agreeably to the cuſtoms of all nations at that time of day, made ſlaves of the priſoners, appointing them to various kinds of ſervitude—Some, for inſtance, to huſbandry, ſome to the more laborious parts of the carpenter's province, and others to the making and burning bricks.

Thus I have given you a ſummary of ſeveral chapters in the Doctor's volume. There are many learned annotations, which I have left behind; but thoſe I have mentioned will be

ſufficient to conciliate your good opinion of the worthy, ſenſible, and animated author.

Dear Sir,

BUT, alas! my dear friend, how little intereſting are all theſe political points, when compared with the important ſcenes which I have been witneſs to this week! I refer to the ſickneſs and dying couch of that great man Dr. Young. It will never be my province to perſonate the ſtateſman, or to move, even in the moſt ſubordinate ſphere, relative to the adminiſtration of public affairs: but to act the part of a ſick and expiring mortal, is an allotment which muſt ſoon be my portion; and God Almighty grant, that I may be enabled to ſuſtain this character with patience, fortitude, and faith!

In my laſt, I acquainted you, that I was called to Welwyn. When I arrived there, I found Dr. Yate waiting for me. It ſeems he had been ſent for three or four days before my aſſiſtance was deſired. Dr. Young's diſorder was attended with ſome obſcurity. But on Tueſday matters wore a very diſcouraging aſpect; and on Wedneſday, Yate and myſelf gave up the caſe as loſt. From that period to the preſent, Dr. Young hath

been dying. Whether the ſcene be cloſed this evening I cannot take upon me to ſay; but this day, at noon, the phyſicians took their leave. Dr. Young, although in his eighty-ſixth year, has diſputed every inch of ground with death, from the ſtrength of his conſtitution, never impaired in early life by riot and debauchery. As I ſat by his bedſide, how earneſtly did I wiſh the vital knot untied! I humbly pray God, that myſelf, and all who are connected with me, whether by blood or friendſhip, may be favoured with an *eaſy* tranſition out of this world into a better. For long and painful agonizings of nature under her diſſolution, appear to me ſufferings hardly inferior to ſome of the ſevereſt tortures of martyrdom; and conſequently trials, which require apoſtolical attainments and ſupernatural aſſiſtances to ſupport our ſouls under them.

Your friendſhip will excuſe the melancholy reflections, for the ſake of the object which ſuggeſted them. I was very fond of Dr. Young's company, and greatly venerated his mental abilities.

Dear

Dear Sir,

THERE is a great luminary (as you juſtly obſerve) lately ſet—to riſe, I hope, more glorious in another world.

It is paſt all doubt with me, that Dr. Young's Night Thoughts have advanced the intereſts of religion. For, whatever imperfections there may be in that performance, there are indiſputably ſome of the moſt ſerious, moſt important, and moſt elevated ſentiments (expreſſed in the moſt nervous, ſtriking, and animated language) which have ever dropped from the pen of man. It is ſaid (and perhaps with truth) that there were oddities in Dr. Young's conduct. But theſe will moulder away from our remembrance faſter than his aſhes; while the more excellent parts of his character, like the colourings of a fine picture, will brighten by time, and improve every year in their valuation. Infidels and ſenſualiſts regard the deceaſed as an enthuſiaſtic or melancholic. But that period is approaching, when wiſdom will be juſtified of her children, and when intrinſic worth ſhall ſhine forth as the ſtars in the firmament.

I have ſometimes thought, when I have heard men of literature ſpeak with indifference of Dr. Young's abilities, that their ſtrictures have pro-

ceeded from a ſecret principle of envy. But when this generation is paſſed away, I dare ſay the Doctor's works will be univerſally held in great eſteem.

Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

Dear Doctor,

I SHALL entertain you with two ſtories of Dr. E———, which, for the poignancy of his wit, are very extraordinary at his advanced years.

I ſuppoſe it will be needleſs to inform you, that he hath had three wives—whoſe deficiency of underſtanding, or futility of behaviour, would have exerciſed the patience of a ſaint.

The Doctor ſays, that ſome ſhort time ago, a man knocked at heaven's gate, ſoliciting an entrance into the manſions of happineſs. Peter (who, you know, is ſaid to keep the key) enquired into the merits of the petitioner's requeſt. The ſupplicant replied, that in the days of his fleſh he had been very unhappy in his choice of a wife. His caſe was commiſerated, his plea was allowed, and admiſſion was granted.

Another ſublunary ſufferer, who had heard this comfortable intelligence, approached heaven's portal

portal with confidence of ſucceſs; and, rapping at the door with the ſaucy air of a lacquey, ſtrengthened his claim for admittance, by urging, that he had wedded TWO very bad wives.—Two! replied the celeſtial janitor, with ſurpriſe! Prithee, ſaid he, get you about your buſineſs, man; we never receive fools into our ſociety.

An impetuous young puppy was lately in the Doctor's company; at which time he inveighed ſeverely againſt the Duke of Cumberland, for the deſtruction which his Royal Highneſs had made of the rebels at the battle of Culloden. The ſtripling called the Duke by the opprobrious name of Butcher, and affirmed his Highneſs, *after the engagement was over*, had, in *cool* blood, and with his *own* hand, murdered *five hundred* of the enemy. The eccleſiaſtical ſage rejoined, ſarcaſtically, 'And what! was that all?' "All!" ſaid the youth, with a face of wonder—"Why, "were not five hundred victims ſufficient in- "ſtances of the duke's cruelty?" 'Poo, poo!' anſwered the Doctor, 'you have got your ſtory 'by halves. His Highneſs, after he had ſlaughter- 'ed five hundred Highlanders, eat up every one 'of them, which hath occaſioned his exceſſive 'corpulency.'

Dear Sir,

MAY I expreſs my joy at hearing that Mrs. W. is not yet commenced an immortal? Though I doubt not but ſhe would be a gainer by ſuch an exchange, yet they who are acquainted with her, will be better pleaſed at her further continuance in the fleſh. Her ſyſtem is a very delicate one; not ſo properly upholden by internal ſtrength as by eaſe and tenderneſs. Thus a ſmall taper, with a ſlender wick and feeble flame, ſhall laſt as long as a candle of ſix to the pound, provided it be defended from all rude blaſts of wind, and other boiſterous contingencies. That it may burn long, and burn bright, is my hearty wiſh. And, if you pleaſe, the ſame benediction ſhall be extended to your own luminary of life.

My dear Friend,

AND thus you learn, that the rich man died! It may not become you and me to make, from this event, any inferences anſwerable to that chapter of St. Luke from whence I have borrowed my capitals. But as I ſtood by the bedſide, and enquired into the age of the dying man, I could not help thinking, that the parity of our years *(for it ſeems he had not commenced a ſexa-*

a fexagenarian) ſuggeſted to me a moſt important leſſon; namely, that the ſame common enemy, who was then encountering Mr. **** was likewiſe in full march towards me, and would as certainly overtake me.

I have frequently thought how great muſt be the ſurpriſe of a ſoul juſt diſembodied! The novelty of the ſcenes muſt powerfully affect even every good man. But if the deceaſed were unhappily of a different character, what inexpreſſible conſternation and terror muſt ſeize the guilty ſtranger!

Are theſe reflections owing to the prejudices of education, as the gay part of the world would ſay they are; or are they not the natural and obvious thoughts of a reaſonable being? eſpecially of a man who believes a futurity, and that his conduct in this world will influence his condition in the next.

Dear Sir,

I AM ſorry you are a farmer again; becauſe I think that not one in a thouſand of that profeſſion is an honeſt man. It was ſaid by Auguſtus Cæſar, that he held phyſicians cheap, becauſe he thought their intereſts were ſo cloſely connected with diſeaſes, that they muſt be tempted

ed to wish evil to mankind. Do not wealthy farmers wish scarcity to a community, that they may avail themselves of a general want?

Formerly, when a raw unexperienced boy, I was used to entertain a most favourable opinion of the innocence and probity of the class of men I am speaking of. This error I was certainly led into by books.

> But now, whatever poets write,
> 'Tis sure the case is alter'd quite.
> Virtue no more in rural plains,
> Or Innocence or Peace remains;
> But Vice is in the cottage found,
> And country girls are oft unsound.

FINIS.

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